August 1986

$1.50

Chronicles

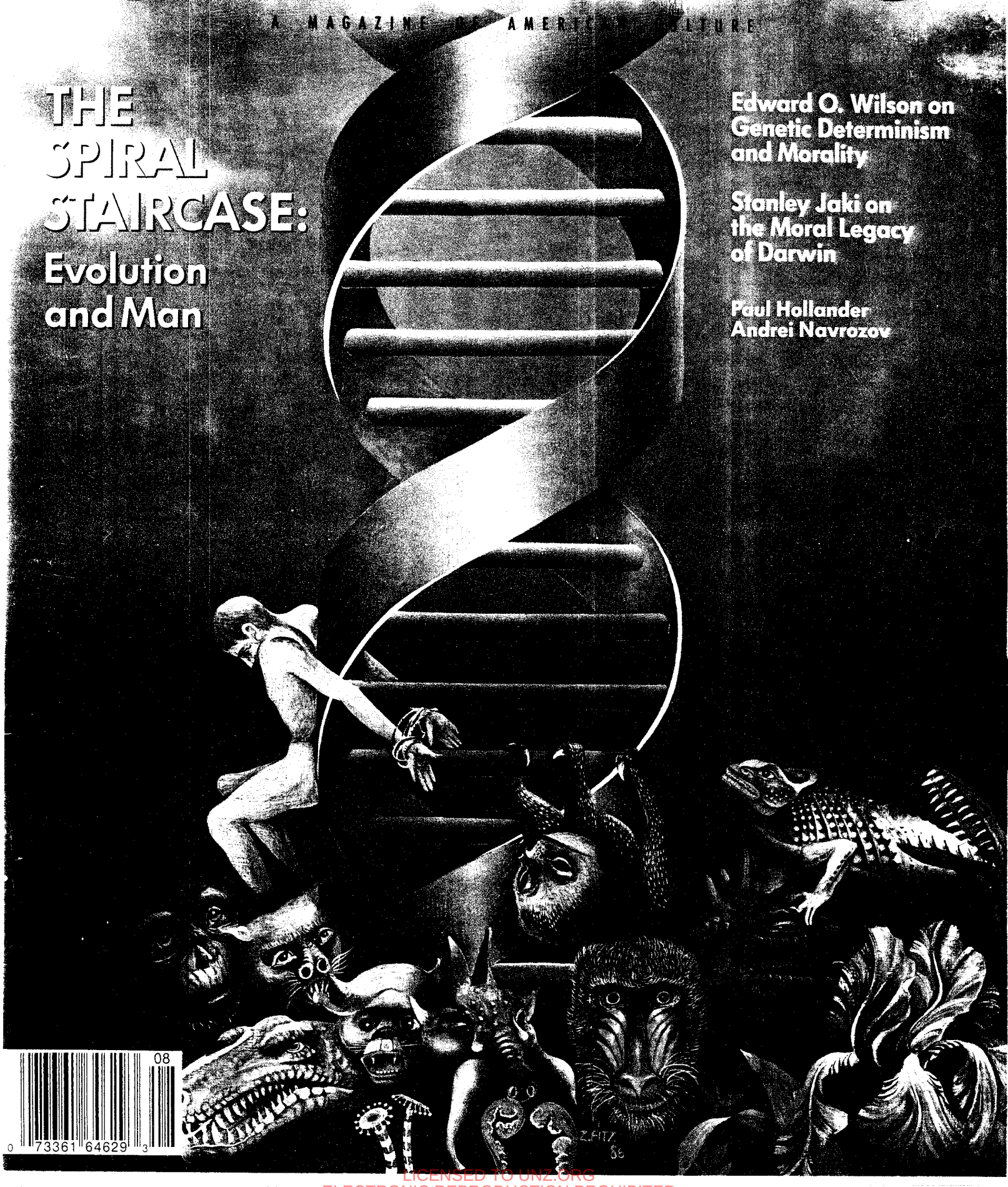
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE: Evolution and Man

Edward O. Wilson on Genetic Determinism and Morality

Stanley Jaki on the Moral Legacy of Darwin

Paul Hollander
Andrei Navrozov



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Remember The Wall

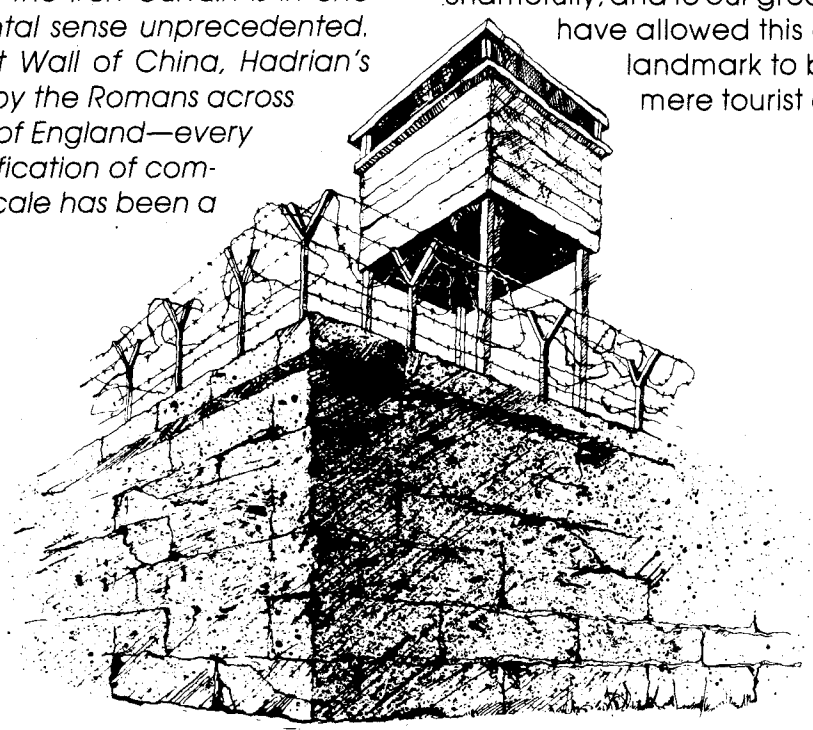
August, 1981 marked the twentieth anniversary of the construction of the Berlin Wall. The significance of this event went largely unreported by the American press with the notable exception of Life magazine.

Life published seventeen pages of color photos of the 4,500-mile border of the Soviet bloc. Everywhere, soldiers stand ready to shoot those who attempt to flee. The sobering implications of the Wall were not lost on the author of the article who wrote:

"It's not the first time a great power has tried to secure the margins of empire behind bulwarks of metal and stone, but the Iron Curtain is in one fundamental sense unprecedented. The Great Wall of China, Hadrian's Wall built by the Romans across the north of England—every other fortification of comparable scale has been a barricade thrown up against the threat of invasion. Unique in history, the Iron Curtain is predicated on the need to keep subject peoples penned in. After a few early modifications and continued remodeling over the years, it has become a remarkably effective prison."

In other words, the hundreds of millions of people within the Soviet bloc are, quite simply, slaves. Such is the grim reality of the socialist "dream." The image of the Wall, with its barbed-wire fences and machine-gun-toting guards, should be indelibly etched in the national consciousness.

Shamefully, and to our great peril, we have allowed this grotesque landmark to become a mere tourist attraction.



"If there is any political fact in this world from which it should be possible to take your moral bearings, this is it."

Joseph Sobran

1844

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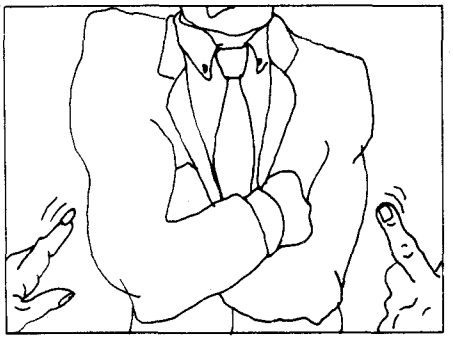

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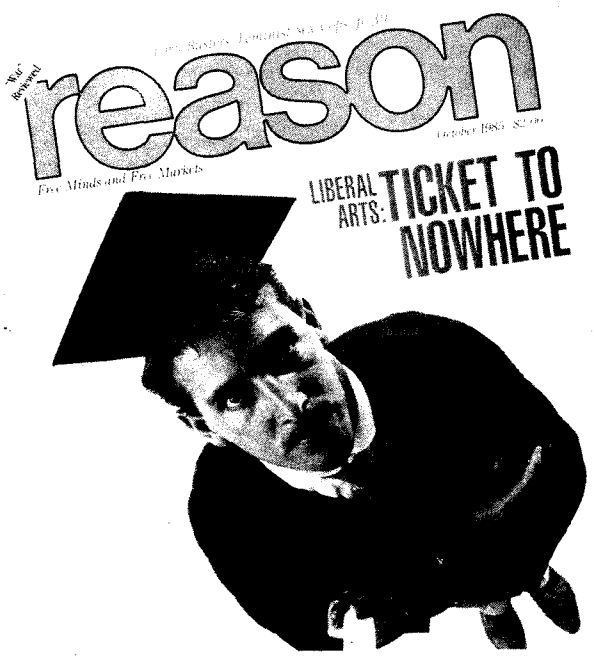

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A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE
Vol. 10, No. 8, August 1986

THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE: EVOLUTION AND MAN

A Publication of
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Illustrations on the cover and throughout the text by Zbigniew and Emilia Fitz.

CHRONICLES (ISSN 0887-5731) is published monthly for $18 per year by The Rockford Institute, 934 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Second-class postage paid at Rockford, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *CHRONICLES*, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054.

Editorial and Advertising Offices: 934 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103. Editorial Phone: (815) 964-5054. Advertising Phone: (815) 964-5811. Subscription Department: P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054.

U.S.A. Newsstand Distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 1130 Cleveland Road, Sandusky, OH 44870.

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Jean Genet (1910-1986). Only two books made me feel physically sick: One was the work of the Marquis de Sade; the other was Sartre's *Saint-Genet, Comédien et Martyr*, which depicts the playwright Jean Genet's prison years and homosexual enjoyments. Did the thief-pederast deserve a biography, and more to the point, did he deserve incandescent praises while he lived and obituaries when he died —not too long ago?

In saner times he would have been kept in jail or some asylum, then transported directly from cell to cemetery. In ours, he has become the symbol of an age and inspirer of its abject legislation. Both he and Sartre wrote that good and evil are society's inventions, and that humanity demands that those who situate themselves outside conventional morality should have a right to their choice. Legislators all over the Western world agree and are grateful when homophile paraders in New York City give up the charming idea of naming their portable latrines after Cardinal O'Connor.

But Genet was a great dramatist and poet, thus an exceptional case, chant his admirers. Even this is questionable, if not false. His theatrical productions were *succès de scandale*, and police were mobilized whenever *Paravent* or *Balcony*, both anti-French plays glorifying defeat in Algeria, were produced. The play *Servantmaids* possesses stylistic qualities and a certain dramatic force, but these are squandered on an artificial issue, the murder of a mistress planned by her chambermaids, a trifling subject for a drama. Genet as a playwright had this flaw common with Beckett, Pinter, and Albee: the deliberate choice of the gutter as a stage set and of half-alive wretches as characters. Greek tragedians put the cothurnus on their actors' feet to make them appear not only more than, but also higher than, human; moderns take away the little humanity that their texts leave to their personages, who are merely spokesmen for their ideology.

The contrast for a Jean Genet is not only with Sophocles; he manages pitifully compared to Villon, thief and possibly murderer, but a superb poet; to Verlaine, a homosexual but whose crystalline words sob like a violin; to Rimbaud, a corrupt adolescent saved by genius. The latter two are *poétes maudits*, accursed but aware of redemption through art and spirit. Theirs is the itinerary of man, from sin to purification, evil dissolved in the sacrament of literature.

In all aspects, Genet was deservedly a reject. His life was devoted to hatred and vengeance from the moment that he stole money as a small boy from his guardian parents. From this nucleus-episode there grew an aborted existence, strangely unillumined, I do not say by grace, but by poetic beauty. He was embittered by prison life, we are told. Yet he was freed from jail as a

young man, discovered as a minor poet, soon as a playwright. In rare moments, critic Robert Poulet opines, Genet became a true stylist, perhaps among the half-dozen that French literature produced since the war. This ought to have reconciled him, if not with the world at large, at least with the mysterious world of art, next door to creation.

The few interviews he gave, even in later years, are also marked with hatred of everything and indifference toward his work. Was Genet an ideologue like fellow poet Louis Aragon, the composer of an Ode to Stalin? Hardly. Genet lived, as it were, negatively, amidst short patches of ephemeral fame: the book about him by Sartre and his, after all, modest oeuvre as a playwright. The borrowed substance of his life will have come from the snobbish critics who sing posthumously his glory, not as a writer, but as a dark angel of pornography and an unoriginal inventor of pedestrian topics. In times more noble than ours, news of his death would be dispatched among the accidents of the day. In our decades of twilight, Jean Genet, who could not make it to the rank of a *poéte maudit*, will at least remain a damned soul.

—*Thomas Molnar*

The Pulitzer Prizes included a surprise this year: *The Denver Post* won the Public Service Award for a series of articles showing that the great majority of "missing" children are in fact runaways or have been abducted by a divorced spouse. For exploding a myth that plays into the hands of social workers and other enemies of the family, the *Post* deserved recognition—but not the Pulitzer, which is reserved for newspapermen who know how to follow orders.

Most of the 1986 Pulitzers were predictable. Two *Dallas Morning News* reporters won the "National Reporting" award for their investigation of racial discrimination and segregation in East Texas. The *New York Times* won "Explanatory Journalism" honors for "explaining" (i.e., editorializing against) the "Star Wars" initiative. Jules Feiffer of *The Village Voice* took the cartoon award for his predictable political cartoons. Jimmy Breslin of *The Daily News* won the commentary award for reporting charges of police torture of a narcotics suspect in Queens. (The Pulitzer citation given Breslin praised him for columns that "consistently champion ordinary citizens." Now we know what the press lords consider "ordinary.") The nonfiction award was split between a book on apartheid written by a *New York Times* writer and a book on desegregation by a former *New York Times* writer. And so it goes.

Awarded by the Graduate School of Journalism of Columbia University, the Pulitzers carry a cash award of only $1,000, but no other award in American journalism bestows wider visibility and prestige. Yet in recent years, some observers have voiced doubts about the prizes. It is not just that writers for East

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Coast papers like the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and *Boston Globe* receive more than their share of awards (and spots on the prize juries). More troubling is the discernible thematic bias. Writers like Seymour Hersh, Sydney Schanberg, David Halberstam, Bob Woodward, Jack Anderson, Ellen Goodman, David Broder, and Mary McGrory capture the Pulitzer spotlight by betraying state secrets, agitating for progressive reform, or attacking traditional communities.

The exceptions go a long way toward proving the rule: George Will, the left's favorite conservative, won a commentary award in 1977, but for William Safire to receive the same recognition in 1978 the Pulitzer Board had to overrule an unsympathetic jury. Will is safe, predictable, and uninfluential, while Safire is a dangerous man. William Buckley gets Pulitzer attention only for his thrillers, as the work that helped to spark the conservative revolution has been passed over for the likes of Walter Smith and Mike Royko. Joe Sobran may as well hang a picture on the place he's been reserving for his (deserved) Pulitzer citation.

The *Boston Globe's* high-minded coverage of court-ordered desegregation in Boston earned a Pulitzer Gold Medal for Public Service and a citation lauding the *Globe's* "impartial . . . honest and accurate report of what was going on in the schools, the streets, the entire community." Boston newspaperman P.J. Corkery offered a more credible assessment recently in *The New Republic*:

> [The *Globe*] sought to report only those events of the world that it thought salutary for its readers to know. . . . In September 1975, when Boston schools opened under a court order, the *Globe* headlined the opening day "Boston Schools Desegregated, Opening Day Generally Peaceful." In fact, as the *New York Times* and the television networks reported, it was a violent, rock-throwing day, a day of pure hate in South Boston, the one place that counted. The *Globe* later received a Pulitzer Prize for its busing coverage, a fact that once and for all convinced me that the newspaper Pulitzers are awarded out of a cozy sense of comradeship, not out of any concern for the ideals espoused by Joseph Pulitzer.

But could "the ideals espoused by Joseph Pulitzer" make the prizes much better? Probably not. Ideals never stood in Pulitzer's way when he built up the circulation of the St. Louis *Post Dispatch* on the basis of sensational articles on prostitution, dishonest accounts of the Spanish-American War, and, on at least one occasion, a call for vigilante justice. (Nobody's all bad.) High standards of journalistic ethics did not keep Pulitzer from shooting a man when he called him a liar. (Reportedly, the publisher of the *New York Times* owns a license for a handgun.) Pulitzer liked to style himself as a progressive reformer, but sometimes the halo tilted awkwardly: When the *Post-Dispatch* printed a suicide note on the front page, the paper simultaneously editorialized for new limitations on "the power of a coroner" to make "these secrets public property," as though coroners told newsmen what to print. Even if the coroner had tried to keep private notes out of the news, Pulitzer's reporters were encouraged to pry into officially closed government records and proceedings—all for the press's right to know. (Is there an honorary Pulitzer for Daniel Ellsberg?)

Mail-order brides from Asia are catching on in post-feminist America. According to a recent article in the *New York Times Magazine*, there are now at least 100 agencies in the United States that specialize in bringing together American men and Asian women. In the usual approach, mail-order firms collect photographs, addresses, and self-descriptions from Asian women and arrange them together in a catalogue, which they sell to interested American men for anywhere between $50 and $500 for a monthly or bimonthly subscription. It is up to the man to begin correspondence with the most appealing prospects. If everything goes well, if both parties like what they see in the letters and photos and what they hear in exchanged tapes, the man proposes. If accepted, he travels to the Orient for nuptials and then brings his bride back to the States as soon as the appropriate immigration papers can be filed. Between 2,000 and 3,000 American men find a mate this way every year.

Things don't always work out. There are reports of Asian brides abused by their new American husbands and of husbands given the slip by cunning brides just looking for a ticket to America. But the *Times* highlighted cases where everything had gone swimmingly: a former monk in Ohio who feels he's just "starting my life now" since marrying a Philippina and a California technician convinced that his new Asian spouse will prove "truer and more loyal" than his three previous American wives. According to Davor Jedlicka, sociologist at the University of Texas at Tyler, American men in search of an Asian wife regard "the women's liberation movement as the cause of their problems." The feminists have made "American women . . . aggressive, selfish, not family oriented," while Asian women are still "family centered, undemanding, untouched by women's liberation."

The very thought that some American men might be finding submissive traditional wives horrifies feminists. Some have gone so far as to compare the mail-order bride business to 19th-century slave-trading and are seeking to outlaw the practice. But no one on either side of the Pacific is being forced to the wedding altar. The new mail-order marriages are simply an inevitable cultural readjustment. The latest figures on marriage and fertility among American women suggest that brute biology may erase the fragile ideals of feminism: few feminists attract husbands, and fewer have children. If America does Orientalize its culture over the next generation, we will have Ellie Smeal to thank. They'd better enjoy NOW, since TOMORROW belongs to the sweet old-fashioned girls having children, while feminist propaganda will turn out to have less staying power than Shaker furniture.

Art history has been touched up with a feminist airbrush. It seems that somebody—in addition to the old

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writers for *Saturday Night Live* —noticed that virtually all of the past masterpieces of art were created by men. From Phidias to Saint-Gaudens, from Giotto to Picasso, painting and sculpture have been as masculine as hunting deer or chewing tobacco. Typically, the only women in the studio were models.

For two decades, this bias in nature and history has been faithfully represented in the classic *History of Art* by Horst W. Janson. Janson's son Anthony recently told *ARTnews* that his father "took plenty of heat for excluding women from the book." Janson Senior died in 1982, and when Abrams approached Anthony about revising his father's work, the boy proved to be no marble chip off the old block. He couldn't take the heat. The new edition of *History of Art* makes every effort to paint a rosy picture of women and minorities in the arts. Cezanne, Moore, and Renoir must now share the stage not only with Georgia O'Keeffe but with such female luminaries as Artemisia Gentilleschi and Judy Pfaff. Janson the Lesser has already indicated that he is on the lookout for other overlooked females for future editions. Anthony never received directions from his father as to how to go about revising his work. "He didn't leave notes behind or even discuss it much. In a fleeting reference, he did mention that he knew he would have to bite the bullet and include women artists." The old man was lucky to die before breaking all his teeth on feminist bullets—almost every one a dud.

Academic freedom has probably always been a political weapon, but a recent case seems more outrageous than usual: the denial of tenure at Bowling Green State University in 1980 to Jerry Bergman. Bergman had earned two social science Ph.D.'s and had published numerous articles and a recognized classroom text in his field. He was consistently ranked near the top of his college in university-administered student surveys on teaching effectiveness. According to *Religious Freedom Alert*, Bergman had the support of the tenured faculty in his area of specialization, of his department chairman, and of the dean of his college. He did *not* receive the two-thirds approval of his full department normally given to tenure candidates, but observers at the university believe that those who voted against Dr. Bergman did so primarily because they objected to his articles defending creationism. Rosalind Charlesworth, a colleague at BGSU, found "these criticisms [of Dr. Bergman's creationist views] . . . totally out of place and invalid as they amount to religious discrimination and censorship." Several other colleagues agreed. Observers also point to several violations of university rules—notably the requirement for annual written evaluations —in this tenure decision.

Bergman's case is now in the Federal courts. Last year a Federal judge in Ohio ruled against Dr. Bergman, saying that no Federal law required a university to follow its own rules. (In a recent conversation with *Chronicles*, the plaintiff pointed out that this same judge was soon thereafter arrested for drunken driving and discovered to have a serious alcohol problem.) The case is now in appeal.

There is no good way out of the mess at this point. To all appearances, it is a clear-cut case of religious discrimination. Yet the Federal courts already intrude into far too many affairs without giving them one more precedent to abuse elsewhere. And, too, there are good reasons for the skepticism of most zoologists and many thoughtful Christians about the virtues of creationism as science or religion. Still, Bergman teaches educational measurement, not paleontology or theology, and he had convinced his colleagues and students of mastery of that discipline. Federal judges, like university administrators, were probably created on the *fifth* day, along with all of the other "creeping things."

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles*:

The Tower of Babel

"Without wishing to encourage any America Firster sentiments, I do think it is long since time for us Americans to quit groveling before the nations of the world. There is much that could be better in this country, but nothing that a few terrorist attacks on Broadway, Madison Avenue, and Hollywood couldn't cure."

—from "Short Views"
by Thomas Fleming

ALSO

Thomas Reeves and Samuel T. Francis square off on the Joe McCarthy debate

Arnold Beichman appreciates American journalists for their courageous refusal to criticize the USSR

Inga Karetnikova and Igor Golomstock illustrate the cult of the leader

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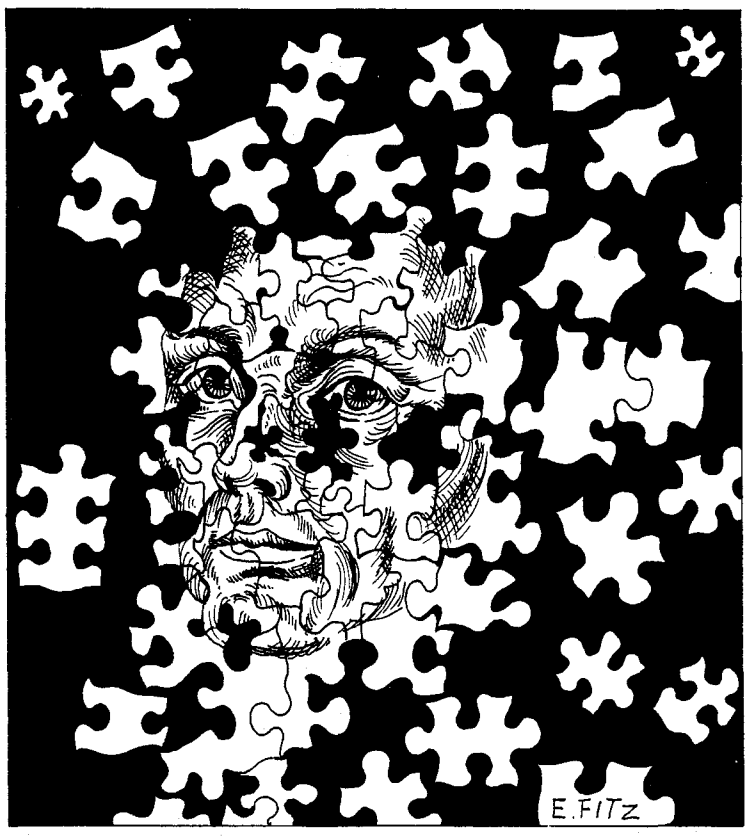
JOURNALISTS AND OTHER ANTHROPOIDS *by Thomas Fleming*

It is over 60 years since the Scopes Trial attracted journalists like Henry Mencken and Joseph Wood Krutch to Dayton, Tennessee, and yet the teaching of evolution is once again as controversial as it was in 1925. Most of the debate is carried out between militant fundamentalists and equally militant materialists. While most of the fundamentalists stop short of believing that the earth is flat (and square!) or that the sun goes around the third planet, they do treat the books of the Old Testament as an infallible declaration of scientific truth.

The rigid materialists, on the other hand, despise all of Scripture as nothing more than a set of literary and historical documents. Most Americans fall somewhere in between and view the Bible as an important (revealed?) source of wisdom and consolation. The classic *via media* was taken by C.S. Lewis among others: the important lesson of Genesis was the revelation of the universe as divinely created; all the rest—methods, processes, timetables—mere footnotes to while away the weary hours of scientists and polemicists.



The current debate is complicated by something called "creation science." Now, whatever creationism is, it is not science in the ordinary and accepted sense. While scientists are often as close-minded as a street-corner preacher, as a class they do not claim to know all the answers in advance. One of the marks of a great scientific mind, I would suggest, is a certain obtuseness. While everyone else knows or pretends to understand reality, the scientist simply cannot bring himself to see the emperor's new clothes. They are all a little like Parmenides, the philosopher who insisted that despite appearances, reality was a solid sphere, unmoving and unchanging. The creationist, on the other hand, knows all the answers in advance. Whether he is wrong or right doesn't really matter, since his views are not up to him. He is not only not a scientist, he is not a philosopher of any kind.

The creationists may, of course, be right in claiming that the universe was invented in the course of six revolutions of the earth upon its axis (or circuits of the sun around the earth), although why it took that long remains a puzzle. The entire debate is in some senses silly. Like squaring the circles, attempts to circumscribe the infinite are largely a waste of time. When most biologists discuss these questions of origin and purpose, they are speaking as amateurs hopelessly out of their metaphysical depth; and when churchmen attempt to pronounce on scientific issues, they simply degrade their calling.

The really pertinent struggle in all this is not the contrast between Darwinists and fundamentalists. It is not even, as some have suggested, between religion and materialism: Those who profess faith loudly with their mouths do not always do the Lord's work. Chesterton accused honest atheists of belonging to "Christ's party without knowing it," and any man that works sincerely for the truth serves Him who called Himself the truth.

No, the great struggle is not over how man got here, but what he is. Are we creatures of infinite possibility, without constraints or limitations imposed on us by our nature, or are we specific, rooted, and defined—either by our history as a species, the divine will, or (as I think) both? On the one side range the most influential social philosophies of modern times: Marxism, existentialism, behaviorism, American (i.e., Boasian) anthropology. On the other side stand principally two groups: Christians and Darwinists who, with halfhearted support of a few Freudians and an

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occasional cognitive scientist, continue to speak of human nature. What is more, their views are remarkably similar, although neither side much cares to admit it.

Do Darwinists point to the prime significance of reproductive success? They might quote Genesis: Be fruitful and multiply. For the Darwinist emphasis on competition and strife, we have the entire Old Testament—beginning with the story of Cain and Abel—to illustrate the human propensity for strife. On point after point—from sexual differences to social order—Darwinists (especially sociobiologists) have been providing ammunition for the almost empty cartridge belts of Christian apologetics. While most Darwinists mistakenly regard the Christian view of man as too static and rigid to have anything in common with a science based on evolution, in fact Christianity is a remarkably dynamic faith that has consistently held out the promise of improvement. It is doubtful that Darwin's theory could have been arrived at in anything *but* a Christian civilization whose peculiar sense of linear time encourages a belief in evolution and progress. To put the matter as plainly as I can, an atheist Darwinist *sometimes* serves the faith more effectively than a convention of deacons or a convocation of bishops (or is that a tautology?).

It must be said that journalists on both sides have done very little to advance the discussion. Entrenched modernists in the fashionable opinion journals are forever canting about the threat to civil liberties posed by fundamentalists. In their view, it is a crime against humanity when families and local communities attempt to have some say in what their children are taught. On the other side, some conservative journalists have made capital out of the (comparatively) trivial disagreements which divide the Darwinist camp. Biologists may quarrel over theories of punctuated equilibrium and cladistics, but the main outlines of the neo-Darwinist synthesis are not being debated by serious, mainstream scientists. To convert a scientific discussion into a political issue works great mischief, no matter who does it.

Still, when the intellectual part of the debate is set aside, the fundamentalists have a point. The political Darwinists have not been content simply to advance their views in the forum of scientific debate. Like Galileo, some have gone out of their way to make extravagant statements: they *know* there is no God, no right or wrong, and they have a *right* to indoctrinate the children of the taxpayers who pay them their salaries.

In many ways, the Scopes Trial illustrates the tragic nature of the conflict. From first to last, the Darwinist cause was moral and political—not scientific. Scopes was himself a science teacher who only substituted in biology, but he was egged on by an eccentric immigrant from New York, George Rappleyea, who had been teased by fundamentalist friends for his belief in evolution. He told them he'd get even, and he did. The ACLU, which had posted a reward for anyone who violated Tennessee's antievolution law, was the principal agitator of the case, although its representatives—Dudley Malone and Clarence Darrow—repeatedly insisted that the whole affair was the fault of the prosecution's star counsel, William Jennings Bryan.

The Great Commoner was not in good health during the trial (he died in Dayton), and his speeches showed only a reflection of the oratorical brilliance for which he was famous. Still, the prosecution had two effective arguments: first, that states had the right to proscribe and prescribe the curriculum content of state-supported schools, and second—this was Bryan's strong point—that teaching of evolution led to social dissolution and moral anarchy.

In the course of the trial and in his summation speech (published but not delivered), Bryan made effective use of the Leopold and Loeb case. Darrow, the murderers' attorney, had attempted to shift the blame to Nietzsche and the intellectual climate of the universities. Didn't the schools and the states have the obligation, not just the right, to prevent an entire generation from growing up like the spoiled rich kid who killed a boy just for the thrill of it? It is a question we are still asking ourselves.

Although Bryan was a fundamentalist hero, his views were not as strict as the sterner brethren might have liked. Under a rude and merciless interrogation by Darrow, Bryan cheerfully admitted he didn't know how long the creation took. Privately, he confessed he did not know whether or not Darwin was right. (Besides, it became clear in the trial that neither Bryan nor Darrow had a grasp of evolutionary biology.) Bryan did not even like the Tennessee law: as a civil libertarian he was opposed to penalities for any honest expression of opinion. It was enough, he thought, to forbid the teaching of evolution without punishing the miserable offender.

Bryan's ignorance of biology is not surprising. He was rarely good on details. His free silver campaign was economically naive; his support for the income tax and the nationalization of railroads was positively harmful; but he had a sound heart, one that was peculiarly American. He was born in Illinois, the son of a Southern father and a Midwestern mother. A Democrat in the Land of Lincoln, he grew up in two churches—Presbyterian and Methodist. He was, to use the military phrase, a general Protestant. Moving to Nebraska in his late 20's helped to give him a vision of Middle America that was not appreciated in what he called "the heart of the enemy's country," New York. His populist crusade against the robber barons cost him the Presidency—the robber barons subsidized the McKinley campaign to an unprecedented degree—but it helped steer the nation out of the doldrums of plutocracy known as the "Gilded Age." Despite Mencken's jeers at the booboisie and the anthropoids from Tennessee, the plain people of America (in Bryan's phrase) were sounder then and now than the rich and well-educated who presume to be their masters. (What good is wealth, education, good family, even talent and intelligence if you end up like Gore Vidal?) Bryan had the courage to stand up against American imperialism in the Philippines, a mess from which we have yet to extricate ourselves, but his finest hour was his resignation as Secretary of State in protest against President Wilson's dangerously one-sided support for the allies in WWI. When the much-dreaded war came, however, Bryan, as a loyal American, volunteered to serve in any capacity.

At Dayton, too, Bryan had his heart in the right place. Why did he get involved in the evolution controversy in the first place? His wife records that Bryan had become increasingly disturbed by his conversations with college students

(continued on page 18)

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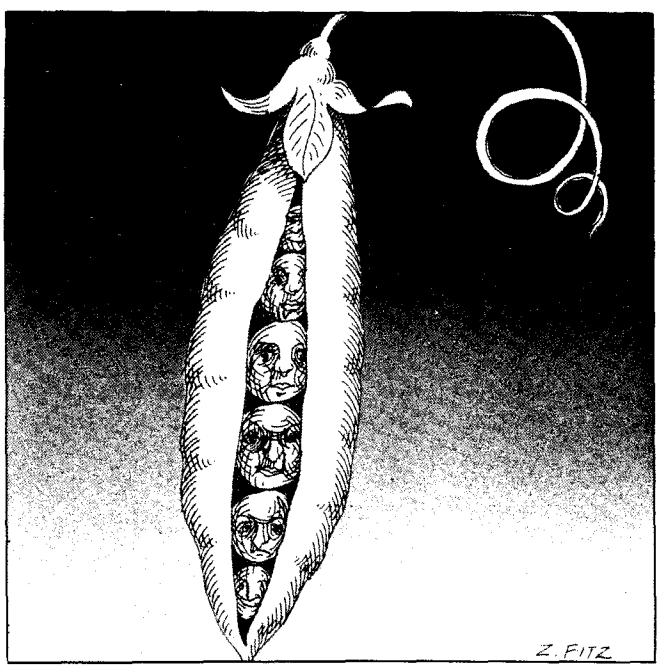
ON GENETIC DETERMINISM AND MORALITY *by Edward O. Wilson*

In his recent speech to Congress, Anatoly Shcharansky said, "All understanding between the East and West must be based on human values common to all men." This appealing statement takes us straight to the central question of moral reasoning: What, if anything, are common human values?

Humanity is and always has been faced with a choice among three metaethics, three differing views of how the world works from the top down and hence, the ultimate means for the selection of moral codes. If behavior is based exclusively on cultural evolution, the codes can drift apart until societies face each other like alien species. If on the other hand morality must be read from the graven tablets of particular religions, we are equally likely to come to an impasse. Dogmas arise in special historical circumstances, are commonly inadequate for contemporary dilemmas, and tend to enhance rather than reduce the alienation of cultures—the process Erik Erikson called pseudospeciation. Finally, if morality represents the upwelling of deep impulses that were somehow encoded in our genes during evolution, our ignorance of such matters remains general and dangerous.

I may be wrong, but I believe that the correct metaethic is the third, fundamentally materialistic one. It works in the following way. Our profound impulses are rooted in a genetic heritage common to the entire species. These propensities are transmuted through culture into specific moral codes, which are integrated into religion and the sacralized memories of revolutions, conquests, and other historical events by which cultures secured their survival. Although variations in the final codes are inevitable, different societies share a great deal in their perception of right and wrong. By making the search for these similarities part of the scientific enterprise, and taking religious behavior very seriously as a key part of human nature, a tighter consensus of ethical behavior might be reached.



Modern biology appears to have banished nihilism. But in so doing it has not led to a narrow form of genetic determinism. It is not true that certain genes prescribe particular responses or that moral codes must be the exact equivalent of our biological nature. I have never met a genetic determinist by this definition. Most or all biologists who study behavior, especially social behavior, are interactionists—they view final thought and response as the product of a complex interplay of genes and environment. Social behavior in human beings is the result of biologically based predispositions filtered and hammered into final shape by the particular cultures in which individuals are reared. On the other hand, I have met many cultural determinists, especially among the reigning social theorists. They deny or at least wholly ignore the influence of biology. The evidence—fortunately or unfortunately depending on how you view it—has proved them wrong. I would say fortunately, because any species wholly dominated by culture and free of genetic constraint would run a grave risk of moral nihilism.

A case in point, out of many now known in human cognitive development, is the avoidance of brother-sister incest. In order to avoid misunderstanding, let me define incest as strong sexual bonding among close biological relatives that includes intercourse, of the kind generally associated with cohabitation and procreation, and excludes transient forms of adolescent experimentation. Incest taboos are very nearly universal as a cultural norm. About a dozen

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societies during historical times—ancient Egyptians, Bunyoro, Nyanza, and so on—institutionalized brother-sister incest for royalty and a few other groups of high status. But the practice is (or was) hedged with ritual, and in every instance the incestuous males are (or were) permitted to take additional wives and hence to practice outbreeding.

The avoidance of brother-sister incest originates in what psychologists have called prepared learning. This means that people are innately prone to learn one alternative as opposed to another. They pick it up more readily, they enjoy it more, or both. The avoidance of sibling incest comes from the "potty rule" in mental development: individuals reared in close domestic proximity during the first six years of life (they share the same potty) are automatically inhibited from strong sexual attraction and bonding when they reach sexual maturity. The rule works even when the children reared together are biologically unrelated and later encouraged to marry and have children, as in the Israel kibbutzim and traditional minor marriages (*simpua*) of prerevolutionary China. Those affected are usually quite unable to offer a rational explanation of why they feel no attraction. Some unconscious process ticked over in the brain, and the urge, they explain, never came.

The inhibitory rule is an example not only of prepared learning but also of "proximate causation" as it is conceptualized by evolutionary biologists. This means that it channels a response of importance to the survival or reproduction of the organism. Proximate causes are put into place by the assembly of genes through the process of natural selection. The ultimate causation, in other words the particular selection regime that enabled certain genes to predominate in the first place, is the well-documented effect of inbreeding depression. When mating occurs between brother and sister, father and daughter, or mother and son, the probability of matching debilitating genes in both homologous chromosomes of the offspring is greatly increased. The end result is a rise in abortion, birth defects, and genetic disease. Hence genes prescribing a biological propensity to avoid incest will be favored over those that do not. Most animal and plant species display proximate devices of one kind or another, and it does indeed protect them from inbreeding depression. In some, the response is rigidly determined. In others, especially the brighter mammals, it is based on prepared learning. Interestingly enough, the human proximate form is nearly identical to that of the chimpanzee.

It is exquisitely human to semanticize innate tendencies. In many societies incest avoidance is underwritten by symbolically transmitted taboos, myths, and laws. These, not the emotions and programs of prepared learning, are the values we perceive by casual observation. They are easily transmitted from one person to the next, and the most readily studied by scholars. But the phenomenon of greatest interest is their etiology: the chain of events leading from ultimate cause in natural selection to proximate cause in prepared learning to reification and legitimation in culture. If the terminal cultural form were somehow to be stripped away by a collective loss of memory, people would still avoid sibling incest. Given enough time, they would most likely invent religious and ethical rationalizations to justify their feelings.

Crude genetic determinism has no part in this process. The existence of the three-step etiology in mental development in no way constricts free will. Individual choice persists even when learning is strongly prepared by heredity. If some future society decides to encourage brother-sister incest, for whatever bizarre reason, it now has the knowledge to do so efficiently. The possibility, however, is vanishingly remote, because the same knowledge tells us that incest avoidance is programmed as a powerful rule and protects families from genetic damage. We are likely to agree still more firmly that the avoidance is a part of human nature to be fostered. In other words, incest avoidance is and will continue to be one of our common values.

This approach to moral reasoning is consistent with the relatively new discipline of sociobiology, but it is not an essential part—or even necessarily correct! Sociobiology strictly defined is the systematic study of the biological basis of social behavior. It is part of the mainstream of the biological sciences. But as its practitioners have extended their modes of analysis into the domain for human behavior, they have run into trouble precisely because of the sometimes unwelcome implications for social theory. In my opinion, shared by some but far from all other scientists, this is the way to go; the materialistic metaethic is essentially correct. However, applications to specific moral problems are always subject to additional evidence and new challenges.

They are also subject to questions about the generality of their importance. It will immediately occur to the reader that incest avoidance might rank as nothing more than a special case. There is a vast difference between this relatively simple phenomenon and economic cycles, religious rites, and Presidential elections. Might such particularities fall within a wholly different domain of explanation and require a different metaethic? Perhaps, but I don't think so.

The evidence favoring the evolutionary approach to moral reasoning is as follows. By mid-1985 no fewer than 3,577 human genes had been identified, of which about 600 had been placed on one or another of the 23 pairs of chromosomes. This is a respectable fraction of the entire human complement, since *Homo sapiens* is a Class III species with no more than several hundred thousand genes (it is what the genes do, not their absolute number, that counts). New techniques for separation and identification make it possible eventually to map all of the genes, perhaps by early in the next century. Hundreds of the genes already known alter behavior in one way or another. In most cases the effect is crude or indirect. But a few change behavior in a precise manner, as for example those modulating depression, reading ability, and performance on spatial tests. Twin and adoption studies have implicated other genes, as yet unmapped and probably working in complex multiples, in schizophrenia, propensity toward homosexuality, performance on tests measuring empathy, and a wide range of personality traits from introversion-extroversion to athleticism and proneness to alcoholism. Moreover, prepared learning and biases in perception have been discovered in virtually every category of behavior thus far studied.

Of equal importance, people often behave as though they were acting in their genetic self-interest, even when this end result is not easily deduced during everyday life. For example, men tend to favor the children of their sisters

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(whose genetic relatedness is easily proven) over the children of their brothers. The avuncular bias is strongest in those societies when paternity is generally least certain. Such correlations do not always exist. Recent studies have found that in contemporary industrial societies reproduction often decreases with wealth and status rather than the opposite as predicted by natural selection theory. But the trends do occur frequently enough to invite serious attention. In their seminal book *The Biology of Religion*, Vernon Reynolds and Ralph Tanner showed that survival and genetic reproduction can be favored by the traditional practices of religion, including evangelism, marriage rites, and even celibacy and asceticism, the latter through their positive effects on group cohesion and welfare.

But to come quickly to the point that most troubles critics of evolutionary ethics, it does not follow that the genetic programs of cognition and prepared learning are automatically beneficial even in a crude Darwinian sense. Behaviors such as xenophobia and territorial expansion may have been very adaptive in the earlier, formative stages of human evolutionary history, but they are destructive now even for those who practice them. Although the cultural *ought* is more tightly linked to the genetic *is* than philosophers have traditionally conceded, the two do not automatically translate one into the other.

A workable moral code can be obtained not just by understanding the foundations of human nature, but by the wise choice of those constraints needed to keep us alive and free in a rapidly changing cultural environment that renders some of our propensities maladaptive.

The choice among the foundations of moral reasoning is not likely to remain arbitrary. Metaethics can be tested empirically. Already, it seems necessary on the basis of the evidence to discard cultural relativism. One system of ethics is not as good as another. Not only are some less workable, they are in the profoundest sense less human. The corollary is that people can be educated readily only to a narrow range of ethical precepts. This leaves a choice between evolutionary ethics and transcendentalism. The idea of a genetic origin of moral codes can be further tested by a continuance of biological studies of complex human behavior, including religious behavior itself. To the extent that the sensory and nervous systems appear to have evolved by natural selection or some other purely natural process, the evolutionary interpretation will be supported. To the extent they are not, the evolutionary interpretation will have to be abandoned and a transcendental explanation sought.

Human curiosity is a juggernaut that will eventually strain our very notion of the meaning of science and religion. Somewhere out there we might even find a surprising conjunction of traditional religion and secular humanism. I doubt that what lies ahead will be specially congenial to any existing ideology or religious belief. Yet to press on is infinitely superior than to retreat through fear and distaste. Enrico Fermi put it as follows: "Whatever Nature has in store for mankind, unpleasant as it may be, man must accept, for ignorance is never better than knowledge."

To the distinguished inventor of the nuclear reactor we may now respond in the face of more advanced biological knowledge: yes, but let us step very carefully.

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MONKEYS AND MACHINE-GUNS: EVOLUTION, DARWINISM, AND CHRISTIANITY

by Stanley L. Jaki

It often happens that when a Greek or Latin word is given a new lease on life in one of the major modern languages, and especially in English, the original meaning of the word may be replaced by a rather different one. This is particularly the case when a word, which was a strongly transitive verb in the classical context, is resuscitated as a generic noun in the modern diction. The word *evolution* is a case in point.

The root of that all-important modern noun is the Latin verb *evolvere*. Whether used by historians like Tacitus and Livy or by poets like Ovid and Catullus or by philosophers like Lucretius, Seneca, and Cicero, the verb *evolvere* either meant to eject some*thing* with a rolling or coiling motion, or to cause some*thing* to flow out or roll out from somewhere, or to unwind some*thing*, or to unwrap or uncover some*thing*. In all these cases it was clearly assumed that the thing or the object of the action had already been there. Only one and uncertain case is found in classical Latin literature for the noun form *evolutio* of the verb *evolvere*, according to the testimony of the two-volume Oxford Latin-English dictionary.

The aura that has grown around the modern word *evolution* is precisely the make-believe that something, and often something very big, can ultimately come out from somewhere where it had not been beforehand, provided the steps of that process are very numerous and practically undetectable.

This is not a new-fangled diagnosis of the process imaginatively called evolution. More than a hundred years have already gone by since the public was regaled with an inimitable dictum produced with an eye on Darwinism: "A logical theft is more easily committed piecemeal than wholesale. Surely it is a mean device for a philosopher to crib causation by hairsbreadths, to put it out at compound interest through all time and then disown the debt."

Those evolutionists who want no part of an evolutionism steeped in the foregoing trick cannot, however, make nonexistent the frequent presentation of evolution in that deceitful sense. Furthermore, they should feel gratified when such a trick is identified and discredited right at the very start of the discussion. Clear air is a necessity not only for physical survival but also for mental balance.

Once castrated of this pseudogenerative power to produce rabbits and bigger pieces, such as elephants and dinosaurs, to say nothing of such intangible jewels as the human mind, from under an empty hat, the word *evolution* should perhaps better yield to the word *development*. This word, so

useful and modest—just think of John Henry Newman's masterful articulation of it—has at least the advantage of being much closer to the original meaning of *evolvere*, that is, to the unfolding of something that in essence at least had already been there.

This substitution will be violently resisted by Darwinists, for the essence of Darwinism is that there are no essences, except one essence, which is sheer matter. Liberal Christian admirers of Darwin would now recall his reference to the Creator at the end of the *Origin of Species*. They had better do their homework properly. That reference, inserted only from the second edition on, prompted Darwin to speak privately of his shame for "having truckled to public opinion." The high Victorian times still wanted to have a bit of religious wrapping about rank irreligiosity. Darwin should have felt even more ashamed for having spoken in

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should have felt even more ashamed for having spoken in his *Autobiography* of his imperceptibly slow "evolution" from belief into mere agnosticism. As one who through much of his adult life had to dissimulate his true views lest a deeply religious and beloved wife be hurt, Darwin finally came to believe that he was not dissimulating anything.

He might have been cured of his illusion about the evolution of his religious beliefs had he reread in his late years his early Notebooks. Available since the early 1970's in easily accessible edition, those Notebooks make it absolutely clear that the Darwin of the late 1830's was a crude and crusading materialist.

There was no gradual evolution from the official naturalist of the *Beagle* who, as behooved a good fundamentalist, had lectured shipmates with Bible in hand on the evil of swearing, to the author of those Notebooks. The transition was rather rapid, indicating a sudden and thorough disillusion which turns one's erstwhile object of love into a target of hatred to be exposed and destroyed by all possible means.

Darwin quickly isolated the notion of species as the central target of his attacks on God, supernatural, revelation, and Bible. This showed not so much his acumen as the patently indefensible character of the production on the third and fifth days of plants and animals "according to their kinds" as a divine warrant of the fixity of species. What *is* a proof of uncommon acumen is Darwin's relentless spotting of data, direct and circumstantial, in support of his evolutionary vision in which all, from the simplest organism to man, followed with inevitable necessity once the original soup of life was available. To his credit, Darwin did not make the claim made by Haeckel and others that science had ascertained the existence and qualities of the original soup. But his conviction was firm about the purely natural emergence of such a soup some billions of years ago.

However, Darwin never appreciated what at one point dawned on his most trusted ally, T.H. Huxley, that the mental spectacle of a forever-evolving life was a metaphysical vision. That Herbert Spencer, who with enormous verbal skill kept portraying the evolution of the most nonhomogeneous from the most homogeneous, was for Darwin one of the greatest philosophers of all times, shows something of Darwin's blindness to elementary fallacies in reasoning.

Reason commanded no encomiums on Darwin's part. His contemptuous remarks about the minds of geniuses were so many defense mechanisms against facing up to the problem of the mind, the greatest and most decisive problem to be faced by evolutionists, Darwinian or other. Not once did Darwin ponder the nature of purposeful action. Not once did he ask himself the question whether his lifelong and most purposeful commitment to the purpose of proving that there was no purpose was not a slap in his own mental face.

The only time when Darwin performed creditably in philosophical matters relating to his evolutionary ideology came when he jotted on a slip of paper, which he kept in his copy of Chalmers' *Vestiges of Creation*, the warning addressed to himself: "Never say higher or lower." He did not fully remember the gist of that warning, namely, that a scientific theory (as distinct from a scientistic ideology) permitted no value judgments.

He never suspected the irony of his answering within the framework of "how" the questions about "why" and "for what purpose." He recognized, however, that there was something unsatisfactory with the "how" he held high, or the selective impact of environment on the fact that offspring were always, however slightly, different from their parents. That "how," supported by genetics as it may be, is still elusive. Indeed, so elusive as to have produced a unique feature in the history of science. Whereas in physics and chemistry the conversion of scientists to a new major theory becomes complete within one generation, in biology a respectable minority has maintained itself for now over four generations against the majority position represented by Darwinists.

The latest evidence of the deep dissatisfaction felt about Darwinism has come from strictly Darwinistic circles. Despair about Darwinism is the driving force behind that recent rush to the idea of punctuated evolution. In no sense an explanation, the theory of punctuated evolution is a mere verbalization demanded by the fact that the geological record almost invariably shows bursts of new forms and hardly ever a slow gradual process as demanded by classical Darwinism. The radical opposition to religion in general and to Christianity in particular on the part of the chief spokesmen of punctuated evolution is of a piece with the antireligious origins of Darwinism.

Many Christians have only themselves to blame if their reaction to Darwinism justifies Huxley's remark that "extinguished theologians lie about the cradle of every science as the strangled snakes beside that of Hercules." There is no intellectual saving grace for those who oppose long geological ages and the exceedingly variegated fossil record with a swearing by the six-day creation story as a literal record of what happened. It is rarely remembered that their hapless wrestling with Scriptures and science is but the latest act in that intellectual tragedy which Luther and Calvin initiated by their lengthy commentaries on Genesis 1-3. The strictest literal interpretation of the creation story told there was upheld by both to the hilt. Present-day Lutherans and Calvinists cater only to the uninformed when, proud of the "main-line" status accorded to them by the secularist media, they hold high the "reasonableness" of their tradition against the "unreasonability" of fundamentalist Protestants.

A hermeneutics which sets limits to the literal interpretation must come to terms with the fact that the Scriptures were born within the Church and not the other way around, and that therefore only a Church with an infallible magisterium can guarantee the inerrancy of the Scriptures.

This, of course, brings us to the branch of Christendom known as Roman Catholicism. The near-escape of papal infallibility from the clutches of the Galileo case taught Catholics a lesson which stood them in good stead in the decades immediately following Darwin. Their resistance to Darwinism was from the start done more with an eye on plain philosophy than on scriptural or dogmatic texts. The essentially philosophical objections of St. John Mivart, a Catholic biologist, to Darwin's theory represented one of the two main attacks that upset Darwin considerably. The other was the demonstration by F. Jenkin, a Scottish engineer, that the laws of statistics did not favor at all the

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evolutionary mechanism known as natural selection.

The mathematical analysis carried out by R.A. Fisher in the late 1920's made natural selection appear in a less unfavorable light. Of course, no mathematics could provide in the first place the reality of cobreeding individuals whose totality is the species. The reality of species has not ceased to remain a pointer to a fundamental question in philosophy, namely, the ability of the mind to see the universal in the individual and particular. It was with an eye on such a question that a philosopher of science, with obvious sympathy for Darwinism but with a rank miscomprehension of metaphysics, proposed in the early 1970's the working out of a biological metaphysics!

The proposal was typical of the thinking of those Darwinists who try to stake out a "humanist" position that affirms materialism with profuse accolades to human values. It is that "humanist" form of Darwinist materialism that alone should be of concern to Christians who take their stand on the eternal validity of values, among them the value of brotherly love. In that "humanist" form brotherly love is evoked through despiritualized labels such as "kin-selection" and "altruism," lest the unwary be alerted to the fact that beneath the Darwinian guise of humanness there lurks a "scientific materialism as the best myth humankind may ever have."

That "humanism" ought to be unmasked at regular intervals, a task which is essentially philosophical. Only with some philosophical acumen and a great deal of common sense can one show that the reasoning of Darwinists is either contradictory, or simply a tacit assumption of basic realities they try to disprove and discredit. Among these basic realities are mind, purpose, and ethical principles. That they cannot be accounted for within Darwinist perspectives has time and again been admitted by leading Darwinists.

To be sure, only a few of them did come across as candidly as did T.H. Huxley a hundred years ago when he warned against seeing a "moral flavour" in the survival of the fittest. Only a few of them admitted as candidly as did Huxley's grandson, Sir Andrew Huxley, that no scientific clue has yet emerged for the origin of consciousness. He also stated in the same breath that the origin of life is still an unsolved problem.

Most Darwinists have done their best to create the illusion that there is no major fault with Darwinism. Yet the fact is that the empirical evidence for the transformation of species under environmental pressure is still circumstantial. The measure of effectiveness that can be attributed to the same mechanism diminishes in the measure in which one considers the transition between ever–larger biological groups, from genera through families, orders, classes, to phyla and kingdoms.

None of these remarks should be construed as a rejection of the chief merit of Darwinism, which in fact assures its genuine scientific status. By ignoring all considerations of design and purpose as being possibly at work in living organisms, Darwinists cultivate biology as a science which deals only with empirical data and their correlations in the space-time continuum.

Unfortunately, the chief glory of Darwinistic biology has also become its chief delusion. The methodical elimination of questions about the reality of design and purpose has been taken by many Darwinists as a proof that design and purpose do not exist. The miscomprehension about the limitations of the scientific method also plagues many Christians who expect science to deliver proofs of design and purpose. They fail to see that such proofs can only come from that philosophy which they all too often consider an enemy of faith. Once they lose their hold on philosophy they can at best come up with poetry in prose, as illustrated by Teilhard de Chardin's flights of fancy.

Father Teilhard could do far worse. In the trenches of World War I, where he served as a stretcher bearer, he wrote glowing encomiums on the war as an unsurpassed means of promoting the heroic qualities of the race. It could not be unknown to him that several members of the German General Staff had some years earlier published books in which their war plans were justified on the same Darwinist grounds. Nor could the two volumes of Darwin's letters published in 1890 be unknown to young Father Teilhard, a prominent supporter of the Piltdown man and other Darwinist causes. Those volumes contained the evidence that Darwin believed that evolution justified the Russians promoting the higher race by smashing the Turkish armies.

It is not known what Father Teilhard's reactions were to Shaw's preface to his *Heartbreak House*, published in the wake of World War I. In that war, machine guns (produced and marketed with sales-pitches reminiscent of Darwinist mottos) performed time and again as effectively in a few hours' time as did the bombs that fell on Nagasaki and Hiroshima in a second or two. In that preface Shaw pinpointed "Anglosaxon" Darwinism as a chief ideological source of Prussian militarism: "We taught Prussia this religion; and Prussia bettered our instructions so effectively that we presently found ourselves confronted with the necessity of destroying Prussia to prevent Prussia from destroying us. And that has just ended in each destroying the other to an extent doubtfully reparable in our time."

Of course, most Darwinists try to find refuge in circumlocutions or in sullen silence when reminded of the true nature of their ideology. In doing so they merely imitate Darwin, who from the comfort of his gentry residence largely ignored Marx when the latter reminded him that class struggle and the struggle for life had much in common. The "humanization" of Darwinism is a far greater threat to human well-being—intellectual, ethical, and spiritual—than are outspoken endorsements of war by prominent Darwinists such as Sir Arthur Keith. His praises of the pruning effect of wars, which coincided with Stalin's and Hitler's preparations for World War II, may sober up dreamy-eyed captives to the myth of progress, biological, cultural, and ethical, defined in terms of Darwinian evolution.

Only a few among those dreamers were as candid as Aldous Huxley, who attributed the favorable reception given Darwinism to the liberation through it from transcendent ethical and sexual norms. Only a few woke up as he did to the need to take a searching look at the word *evolution*.

Evolution should deserve no sympathy if it serves as a proof that something can come out from where it had not

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been at least "in embryo." This is not to suggest that in the manner of preformationists a homunculus should be imagined inside the membrane of the human sperm or that a soul should be attributed to each and every pollen drifting through the air, because human soul or mind clearly crowns the evolutionary process. What is suggested is that evolution or rather the vast spectacle of the gradations of life which life has taken on over billions of years and through a mechanism which is at best most imperfectly understood, be recognized for what it truly is: a vision which is primarily and ultimately metaphysical.

Man is capable of such vision precisely because his nature transcends what is merely physical. Taken in that perspective, the word *evolution* should give no fear to the Christian. After all, his chief perspective, main comfort, and supreme concern ought to remain in the words: "What does profit a man if he gains the whole world but in the process he loses his soul?"—and—"Don't be afraid of those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul"—and—"Be afraid only of the one who can relegate both body and soul to the gehenna."

Gehenna is merely the ultimate and eternal form of anarchy. This is to be kept in mind when humanist Darwinists, including most college professors, are reminded by a fellow academic of the rank inconsistency of their references to moral norms as they recommend, say, the ethical stance of civil disobedience in fighting against racial inequality. In coming to the aid of one such academic (Prof. D. Kagan), Prof. L. Pearce Williams of Cornell wrote in a letter to the *New York Times* in December 1983 of the vanishing of the moral world with the end of Victorian times. He also noted that our world today is a mere consensual world, which, in view of the progressive breakdown of consensus, is rapidly heading toward anarchy.

As a historian of science, Prof. Williams could hardly fail to think of Darwin's work, which prominently figured in the assault made on the traditional moral world in precisely those times. His failure to point that out and to recall the repeated disillusionment of eminent Darwinians with Darwinism shows once more that the only thing man learns from history is that he never learns from history. But those who do not wish to take seriously the lessons of history are bound to help usher in historic disasters.

They do so by cultivating horrendous somersaults in logic whereby all things, big and small, trivial and stupendous, appear to evolve—or as the Romans of old would say, unroll—from under wrappings that seem outright pleasant. For nothing pleases nowadays more than academic respectability even if it is a cover-up for committing one big mental robbery through uncounted petty thefts—all of which are made imperceptible by phrases hollow inside their learned exterior.

Journalists and Other Anthropoids

(continued from page 11)

and their parents. Young Americans started college as muscular Christians and soon found their faith withering on the vine. From their stories he concluded that evolution was to blame, that it *ineluctably* unsettled the convictions of faithful people.

He was wrong, of course. It wasn't evolution *per se* but evolutionists who caused the trouble: wise-guy professors out of love with philistine America, they used the latest weapon against superstition and ignorance. The mark of a second-rate mind, liberal and conservative, is to politicize every question of literature, science, and philosophy, and even then the universities were a haven for second-raters. (In their defense, it should be pointed out that as second-raters they were at least several rungs higher on the ladder than most current academics.)

Recent studies indicate that students continue to lose their faith in college. Why? Are atheists smarter than Christians? The evidence of modern Christians like Eliot, Chesterton, Lewis, and MacIntyre (Alasdair, not Carl) does not support such a view. Are all good scientists rigid materialists? That would have to exclude, in this century, Albert Einstein, Werner Heisenberg, and Sir John Eccles —queer birds indeed, if science led inexorably to an Epicurean world view. It is not even materialism that is the problem. Hume was, so far as one can tell, among the best of men. The cheerfulness he displayed in the painful months before his death appalled the superstitious Boswell. I am not sure that the skeptical Hume, except perhaps by his example, ever corrupted anyone's faith. Philosophy and science are by themselves too difficult, too serious to interrupt the tranquil ignorance in which most of us doze away our waking hours.

Honest and hardworking scientists and scholars almost never present a problem to a healthy society, whether they are Marxists, feminists, or atheists. Most academics and writers are, however, nothing of the kind. They are, most of them, *philosophes* and sophists rather than philosophers, journalists rather than scholars, propagandists rather than scientists or theologians. Oh, journalists and pamphleteers have their uses. But wherever they are found—at *The Nation* or *The Spotlight*, at Yale or at a Bible college, they are not to be taken seriously.

Bryan's real opponent at Dayton was not so much Clarence Darrow as H.L. Mencken. For all his failings, Bryan was an essentially honest man who had done his best to serve the American people. Mencken, for all his virtues as an essayist, scholar, and hale fellow (I grew up hearing my father tell stories about what a great guy he was to meet), Mencken had an ugly streak. If—to quote one of his favorite writers—all poets are liars, then we shall have to coin a new word for journalists, including Mencken. When the great man from Baltimore arrived, he discovered he had been wrong about Dayton: it was actually a pleasant and bustling little town. But before long, he began to fill up the newspapers with his venomous accounts of the local "primates" and "anthropoids" who had made the mistake of being kind to him. Mencken deserved the lynching he just barely escaped. A man of Bryan's character he could neither believe nor understand. While a nation mourned the loss of a great moral leader, Mencken could only rail against him as "a charlatan, a mountebank, a zany without sense or dignity."

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Mencken couldn't help himself: it was the journalist in him talking. At best, journalists are useful idiots; at worst they are, in Sartre's phrase (which is best applied to Sartre), men of bad faith. This is not to say there have not been principled and learned journalists like Chesterton, Albert Jay Nock, Joe Sobran, and Mencken himself, but the general issue specimens are like Housman's mercenaries who "defend [or more often attack] the sum of things for hire." Against all ideologues and propagandists, it should be war under the black flag: take no prisoners, show no mercy—and cruelest of all—pay no attention.

—*Thomas Fleming*

REVISIONS

Nice Guys Finish First

Ever since Epicurus, political philosophers have been treating man's ability to make and keep agreements as one of the foundations of social and political life. In writers like Locke and Rousseau, the social contract assumed the proportions of a religious myth, but by explaining everything, contract theorists understood nothing.

In reaction against Locke's liberal pieties, many philosophers have emphasized the role of conflict, war, and subjugation in the creation of civil society. But it would be a serious mistake to exclude cooperation from the discussion.

Obviously, there are advantages and disadvantages to being nasty or nice. In recent years, the most common method for studying the price and payoffs of competition and cooperation has been through game theory. The favorite game has been the prisoner's dilemma: two criminals are caught for a minor offense. Both will surely be punished unless one of them decides to plea bargain by accusing the other of a more serious crime. If both "cooperate" (i.e., refuse to talk), they receive a moderate reward in the form of a light sentence. If only one talks, then he receives a great reward (i.e., goes free), and the other gets a more serious punishment. If both talk, both lose.

The trouble with most game theory was that it remained theoretical, until Robert Axelrod conducted a prisoner's dilemma tournament. He analyzes the results in *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books; $17.95). In two rounds of competition, scientists and game players were asked to design a computer program which would be tested against all the other programs submitted. In both rounds the clear winner was TIT FOR TAT—the simplest of all. TIT FOR TAT specified only two rules: 1) begin by cooperating; 2) repeat the opponent's previous move. In other words, begin with the expectation of cooperation. If the other player is "loyal," continue to cooperate. If he tries to improve his score by defecting, punish him by following suit until he changes his ways, then forgive him immediately.

Other strategies beat TIT FOR TAT in a head-to-head contest, but over the long haul of the tournament, it racked up the highest score. In fact, all successful strategies included the same basic elements: cooperation, swift retaliation, and forgiveness. More importantly, when the competition was played out over hundreds of generations, only the cooperative strategies survived. In a chapter cowritten with geneticist William D. Hamilton, Axelrod outlines a possible evolutionary scheme for cooperation: cooperating groups are better able to secure benefits for themselves, even in the midst of a predominantly uncooperative population. Genetic kinship provides a possible mechanism for cooperative genes to emerge since family members derive the greatest advantages from altruistic ads. Once that happens, even a small number of cooperators could take over a noncooperative population, while the reverse is impossible.

In a fascinating digression, Axelrod analyzes the emergence of cooperation between enemy troops in World War I. Two sides entrenched across from each other tacitly agreed not to shell each other at certain times (like mess call) and avoided sniping each other, whenever possible. The two sides were not allowed to fraternize, and the officers did everything to frustrate the TIT FOR TAT arrangements which the soldiers arrived at implicitly. But all the efforts of the High Commands went for naught until the senior officers accidentally came up with a plan of carefully monitored, incessant aggression. In the atmosphere of uncertainty created by constant raids, the unspoken reciprocal agreements quickly broke down.

I cannot recommend this book too highly. The ramifications for foreign and domestic policies are far-reaching, and Axelrod makes a start at exploring some of them. He makes the important point that if we really want to promote cooperation, we must "enlarge the shadow of the future." Obviously, if a player thinks the game is coming to an end, cheating works to his advantage. Players and partners will be more cooperative if they think they are in the game "for the duration." From this perspective, a wedding can be seen as "a public act designed to celebrate and promote the durability of a relationship." What Axelrod might have also pointed out is the destructive effect of easy divorce: it teaches partners to distrust each other (hence prenuptial legal agreements) and, perhaps, everyone else.

When the day comes that we are unable to take each other at our word, the New York Stock Exchange will shut down and the whole system of American business, based on promises, will collapse. Then we shall have to turn from the gentle Axelrod to the philosophers of power: Machiavelli and Marx.

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Lame Hands of Socialist Faith *by Paul Hollander*

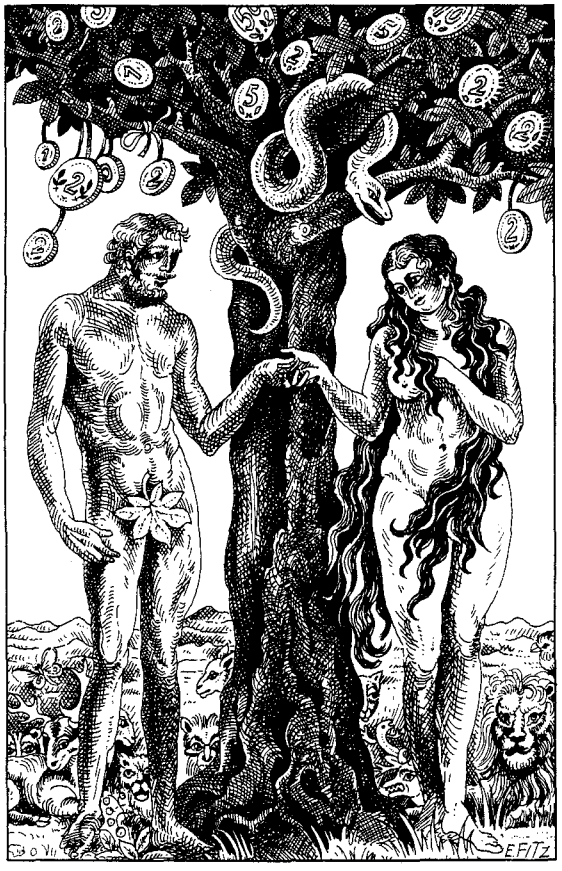
"You . . . have been borrowing goblins from the capitalist. . . ."

—John Ruskin

The Nature and Logic of Capitalism by Robert L. Heilbroner, New York: W.W. Norton.

Socialism and America by Irving Howe, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

For numerous well-known Western intellectuals, capitalism versus socialism remains the great dilemma, the principal philosophical and institutional alternative of our times. It is far from self-evident why this should be the case. Why not political pluralism as opposed to regimentation? Or democracy versus dictatorship? Tradition as opposed to modernity? Or the secular against the religious? Why do so many in the West persist in framing the major political-economic or moral-ideological choices of our times in this arguably dated conceptual framework? And why, by contrast, are intellectuals in the East, or in countries which claim to be socialist, singularly unimpressed by this terminology and disinclined to perceive the major issues of our times through these concepts?



It is tempting to answer that if, as Marxists believe, "existence determines consciousness," "Eastern" intellectuals shun these concepts because they have learned that politics matter more than economics, and that political power does not derive from economics. Moreover intellectuals (as well as nonintellectuals) living under systems calling themselves "socialist" are generally unimpressed by the preoccupation (of their Western brethren) with the ills and evils of capitalism. They may not like advertising or mass culture any more than Western literati, yet they can keep such matters in perspective. They know that the invasions of privacy represented by advertising are easier to fend off than the attentions of the modern socialist state and its various agencies. They are familiar with the ravages of commercialization, or "commodification," a term coined by Robert L. Heilbroner in *The Nature and Logic of Capitalism*, or (in the older terminology) the "cash nexus." Yet they know that these efforts are readily duplicated by the brutalizing political processes endured by citizens in socialist societies. They include the corrosive effects of mistrust generated by the facade of political conformity which is not a luxury but necessity. Nor do personal relations under socialism benefit from official priorities which invariably place "social" or "public" needs ahead of the personal, private, or individual.

This is worth dwelling on, since the notion persists in the West (at any rate among social critics attracted to some socialist alternative) that capitalism is uniquely guilty of ravaging personal relationships, whereas under socialism —while civil liberties and material goods may be in short supply —personal relationships are more pure, less instrumental, more fulfilling. It may be argued that the surviving mystique of socialism gains much of its strength from such conceptions (and fantasies) of vibrant communities and social ties untainted by ulterior or instrumental motives which proliferate in capitalist societies.

Perceptive social critics and intellectuals, such as Irving Howe, know perfectly well that the ideals and theories of socialism have been tarnished and discredited by the practices of states which insist on being called socialist, and yet they cannot let go of the ideal. Their critique of capitalism and their longing for socialism rest on the assumption that there must be better ways to build a socialist society and there must be a society wholly unlike and superior to Western capitalist systems. Moreover, Howe also knows,

Paul Hollander, professor of sociology at the University of Massachusetts—Amherst, is author of Political Pilgrims *and most recently* The Many Faces of Socialism.

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and says so frequently, that "there is no undemocratic road to socialism; there are only undemocratic roads that can bring, and have brought, nations to barbaric mockeries of the socialist ideas." Why, then, is relatively little thought given to the resistance of the socialist ideal to the numerous attempts to realize it? Why the determined insistence that the distortion of these ideals, in the process of their attempted realization, is no reflection on the validity, the substance of the ideals themselves?

I suppose the situation is somewhat similar to the position believers may take toward the ideals of Christianity. These ideals, too, remain noble aspirations even if unrealized, even if there were bloody crusades, inquisitions, corrupt popes and bishops. But perhaps there is a difference. At least in more recent times, the application of religious ideals to personal behavior has been a private matter, one of individual choice rather than organized compulsion. Hence the distortion, or failure of religious values to enrich personal and social existence had a less obvious impact. (Moreover, Christianity—unlike socialism—has inspired and created great works of art.) By contrast, attempts to translate socialist ideals into reality have been highly organized and coercive, touching—indeed wrenching—the lives of hundreds of millions of people. Hence the issue of the discrepancy between socialist theory and practice is far more consequential in our times.

An interesting development prolonging, and explaining in large measure, the survival of socialist ideals and theories has been their gradual transformation from a public belief and a social-political program into a cherished code of personal morality. While not many people, including Howe and Heilbroner, anticipate the realization of socialist ideals in the foreseeable future in any existing society or identifiable historical setting, many derive comfort and a more positive self–conception from preserving socialist ideals.

To profess being a socialist today in the United States is not so much to make a commitment to a specific political party, movement, or program, but rather to bolster one's self-image and self-esteem. It makes some people feel good to think of themselves as socialist, especially if such self-identification reaches back into their youth and is colored by association with youthful vitality and idealism. For many people, "socialist" has simply come to mean decent, generous, sharing, or humane, particularly when such values are critically contrasted with capitalist ones.

The surviving attachment of Western intellectuals to socialism has assumed an irrational, somewhat dutiful and increasingly emotional character. Howe's recollections illustrate this point: "Even after many of us decided that running socialist candidates once there was barely a socialist movement had become a humiliating ritual . . . even then it was still emotionally hard to go to the polls and pull down an old-party lever. The first time I did that, voting in 1952 for Adlai Stevenson, I came out of the voting booth almost physically sick."

Although Howe is well aware of the emotional roots of the attachment to these ideas, he still clings to them. "They became socialists because they were moved to fervor by the call to brotherhood and sisterhood; because the world seemed aglow with the vision of a time in which humanity might live in justice and peace." This being said, it is necessary to point out that Howe has little in common with Marxist-Leninist True Believers; unlike them, he is well aware of the flawed assumptions which shaped many contemporary socialist systems: "A 'complete' transformation of humanity is a corrupt fantasy that can lead to a mixture of terror and apathy." He is also keen on the separation of political and economic power and is well aware of the incompatibility between democratic politics and "the pathos and excitement of revolutionary movements."

If there is one article of faith Howe continues to embrace, it is the abolition of private ownership over the means of production. He writes: "Socialism should be envisaged as a society in which the means of production, to an extent that need not be rigidly determined in advance, are collectively or socially owned—which means democratically controlled." It is precisely the combination of such "collective ownership" with democratic control that has proved the most elusive in practice.

Heilbroner's book represents the other side of the equation necessary for understanding the enduring appeals of socialism: a sophisticated analysis of the ills of capitalism, rooted in Marxian perspectives and categories. Although much of this book is descriptive-analytical rather than moralizing-evaluative, it is not hard to discern the judgmental elements. Heilbroner, like Marx (and more recently Marshall Berman), is preoccupied with the unique and not altogether wholesome dynamism of capitalism, "its historically unique search for generalized surplus," or the "endless quest for aggrandizement." A somewhat overdrawn and mystified portrait of capitalism emerges—I am almost tempted to call it "reified."

Curiously enough, despite the attention paid to the origins, dynamics, and attitudes associated with capitalism, and despite some fleeting references to Weber, Heilbroner skips over the Weberian theories of capitalist motivation and acquisitiveness and their religious aspects. Notwithstanding the generally neutral language and the understated approach, Heilbroner clearly envisions capitalism as a rather malevolent system, which "characteristically" masks its functions. He also

EARLY MUSIC

by Rudolph Schirmer

Early music, light and pearly,
Woke me by a waterfall:
Music I remember fondly
And whole-heartedly recall.

Pearly music, faintly sounding,
Trimmed the stages of the night,
Tuned the moon to milder shining
And the stars to softer light

Earthly music, bright and early,
Noted when the dew is rife,
Woke me slyly and politely
To the consonance of life.

Rudolph Schirmer is a poet and music publisher.

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vigorously embraces the Marxist idea of the dehumanization wrought by the cash nexus, seen in the commercialization of sports in the U.S. and the conversion of ideas into commodities.

Despite his distaste for capitalism, he grudgingly admits that "political freedom in modern times . . . has only appeared in capitalist states" and that "nonstate employment" seems to be a requirement of political freedom "as we know it," at any rate.

I suspect that the author's deepest antipathy toward capitalism is rooted —as is often the case—in a perception of it as a relentlessly rationalsecular, desacralizing force:

> Capitalism would be impossible in a sacralized world to which men would relate with awe and veneration, just as such attitudes cannot arise in a society in which exchange value has reduced to a common denominator all use-values.

So perhaps this is the critical point where the rejection of capitalism and the affinity for socialism converge. Capitalism has certainly brought, in Weber's world, disenchantment to the world and has demystified it to the point of acute discomfort to many of those exposed to the process. Socialism raised hopes about restoring or creating an equilibrium between a benevolent rationality and something close to, or approximating, the notion of the sacred. Both Heilbroner and Howe, and many of those on the same wavelength, know that socialism in its existing forms failed to make up for the ravages of capitalism. But since there is a shortage of redemptive ideologies respectable enough for these Western intellectuals, the attachment to socialism cannot yet be severed.

Pleasant Words & Ugly Books *by Ronald Berman*

"Then shall I dare these real ills to hide
In tinsel trappings of poetic pride?"

—George Crabbe

Fair of Speech: The Uses of Euphemism edited by D.J. Enright, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

***Plausible Prejudices: Essays on American Writing* by Joseph Epstein, New York: W.W. Norton; $17.95.**

English must be kept up. It rarely is. But what a splendid collection of offenses against it is in D.J. Enright's book of euphemism. Those who delight in the instructions for Japanese small appliances will here encounter the ultimate in linguistic self-destruction. Here is a pair of advertisements for continental hotels anxious to sound contemporary: The first offers "two rooms with a vulgar balcony and excommunicating doors" along with a gift-shop where you can buy "jolly memorials for when you pass away." I particularly like the second, which says of its rooms, "I am superb in bed," and which advertises for breakfast "patty of fungus a specialty."

The word *euphemism* is older than we think. Both word and idea suggest middle-class hypocrisy but hypocrisy —and ingenuity and over-refinement and rhetorical play—are much older than the middle class. The word itself goes back to the mid-17th century, when it was defined as "a good or favourable interpretation of a bad word." Its great uses then were as now in detailing, or in camouflaging, realities of politics and sexuality. It is important to realize that euphemism can do both: it can hide, or it can delineate even more sharply with metaphor than we can by image.

How could public language go on without using *intimacy* in place of *sexual intercourse*; *underprivileged* instead of *poor*, *turf accountant* instead of *bookie*; *social security* for a program that has gone broke? Some of the great phrases of our time are euphemisms —especially those for military retreats or civil disasters or ignominious personal failure. But it does get to be tiresome and morally dangerous, I think, to be reminded that TV cameras spy on us in stores "for your own protection" or that commercials for some profitable cause are done as "a public service." The editor reminds us that public euphemism is Orwellian and does more harm beyond the rhetorical realms of "sex, bowel movements, menstruation, money, sickness, and natural death."

The historical information in *Fair of Speech* seems to hold more water than its criticism. I don't think I'm convinced that Jane Austen is being coy in *Pride and Prejudice* when she tells us why Darcy falls in love with Elizabeth. The novel tells us repeatedly about "the beautiful expression of her dark eyes." Darcy mentions them often and the narrator tries to offset other things by their mention. Elizabeth does not conform to the tall, full-chested, white-skinned type of Regency beauty. She makes up for being medium height and sunburned by those intelligent and attractive eyes. But the modern euphemist thinks otherwise and tells us that "a fine pair of eyes" really means a fine pair of "big tits." Suddenly Jane Austen looks either puritanical or sneaking—and Elizabeth Bennet looks a lot different herself.

Jane Austen is famously honest and doesn't mind telling us about mistresses or bastards or anything else. It seems unlikely that she would bother with camouflage here. And the euphemist is probably too suspicious without being critical enough—novelists in the 19th century made their sexual points through *symbolism*. Dickens is a very sexy writer when he talks about eyes in *David Copperfield*—either those of Mr. Murdstone or of Rosa

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Ronald Berman's most recent book is Culture & Politics *(University Press of America).*

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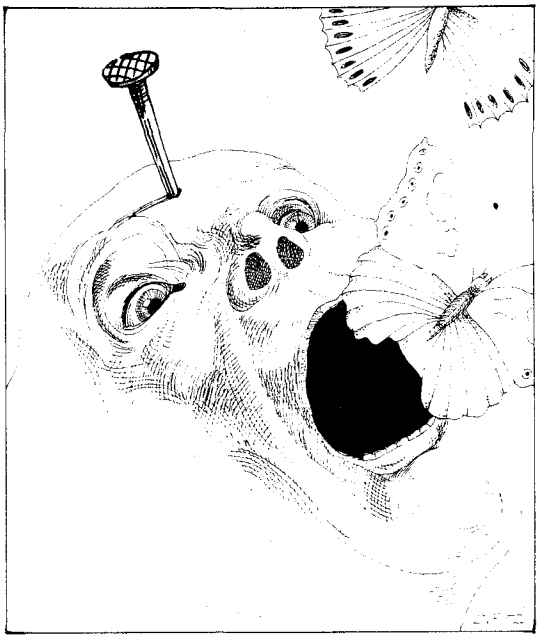
Dartle. They suggest sexuality in themselves, not other parts of the body. And of course novelists do what they want anyhow—*Jane Eyre* is completely open about the heroine being flat-chested. She and Mr. Rochester can even joke about her well-endowed (I think *that's* a euphemism) rival being "a real strapper."

I like *Plausible Prejudices*, not least because it too has to make good out of bad. The critic of current fiction is forced to discuss the social meaning of texts because the stuff he is reviewing is generally not first-rate. I don't mean that it can't compare with Shakespeare, or even with good, gray, respectable third-rate talent like Galsworthy. It's not that good, either. The modern reviewer, of whom Epstein is a very good example, has to deal with people like Mailer or those even worse, if they can be found. It's like getting Berenson to lecture about the dirty pictures in Pompeii. Epstein is fully aware of the problem—he suggests to the culturati that "if it doesn't offend you that American literary academics are able to publish structuralist studies of John Irving, then you probably ought to be in another line of work." Well advised. Epstein is a sharp knife cutting into Spam.

It's almost too bad that *Plausible Prejudices* is a trade book. It really should be a kind of counterweight text for a course on contemporary American writing. It covers Mailer, Roth, Updike, Malamud, Stone, Beattie, etc. And it is very much aware that what it has to say differs tremendously from what publishers, newspaper critics, and academics have to say about the same books. Epstein is hostile to these writers and others in orbit around them not entirely because of cultural politics. He has some heroes: Edmund Wilson and Lionel Trilling. There are viewpoints he respects—those of Mencken and F.R. Leavis. And he has standards. He does something very sensible about those standards, which is to compare Mailer, Roth, and company with Lawrence or Conrad or other great modernists in order to see what exactly has been accomplished by the passage of literary generations.

Epstein is one of the good descriptive critics. We find out by the end of one of his reviews what kind of event has gone on and what kind of language has described it. He keeps track of everything: "Fancy fornication in one form or another is never far off in any of John Irving's novels, and it ranges from adolescent sex to lesbian love to couple swapping to incest. Fellatio in a car, both moving and parked, is another Irving *spécialité de la maison*." Anything written by Kazin about modern writers ought to be coupled with Epstein's imperative of categoricals. You will find out the extent of physical



distortions in Beattie or most possible connections between the different novels of Philip Roth.

There is an added attraction to *Plausible Prejudices*: its extensive coverage of the literary situation in New York and on campuses. Epstein really is engaged in a war of words, and he lets us know who the antagonists are. The reader will find out the score about the *Harvard Guide* or black literature or women's studies or even who is writing the best or the worst of what is being flogged by the plutocrats of publishing.

REVISIONS

The Chicken, the Egg, and the Coop

The problem of population (and populations) is at the very heart of evolutionary biology. It was Thomas Malthus' famous essay on population which inspired Darwin to think about the mechanism of evolutionary change: competition for scarce resources. Much of the 20th century's biological theorizing has focused on the units of selection. Was it the group, as favored by Wynne-Edwards, or the individual? As W.D. Hamilton writes in *Genes, Organisms, and Populations: Controversy Over the Units of Selection* (edited by Robert N. Brandon and Richard M. Burian, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), group selection tended to be favored by those who were unwilling to view human life as a struggle between individuals—an important reminder of the impact of ideology on scientific theory.

Today, the greatest challenge to individual selection is posed not by the group but by the gene. Geneticists like Hamilton and Trivers and zoologists like Richard Dawkins have constructed genetic equations to explain certain forms of social behavior (e.g., altruism towards close relatives) in which the genes themselves, rather than the individuals, are the winners and losers.

To understand the nature and terms of this very important debate, this volume has been put together with an introductory essay on Darwin followed by historically significant contributions by Sewall Wright, Ernst Mayr, George Williams, and David Hull, among others. While it is obviously a book designed for specialists, judicious editing enables an amateur to follow the main outlines of the argument. It is a valuable work for anyone who wants to come to grips with research which may hold a key to the elementary forms of human social behavior.

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Not a Prayer *by Joseph Schwartz*

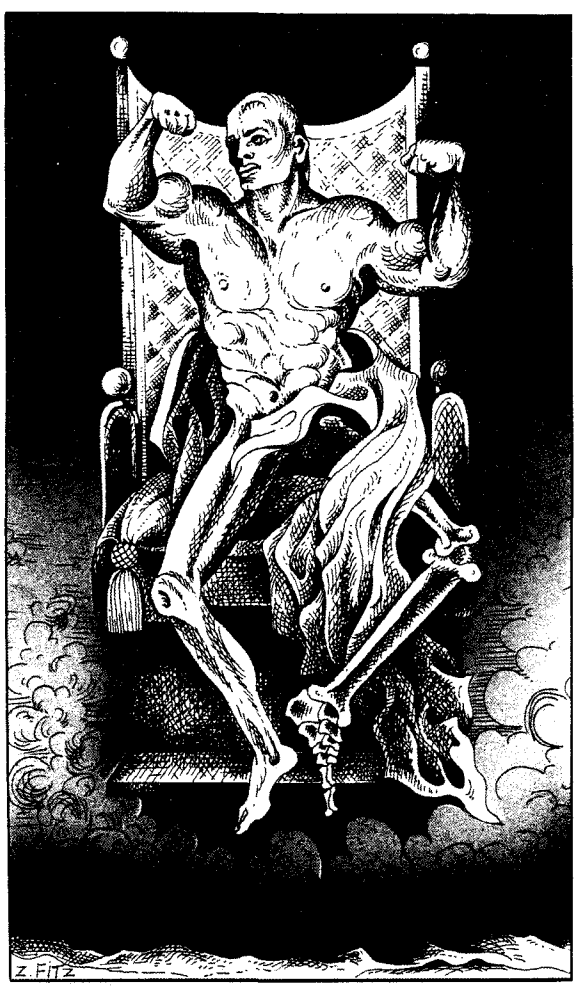
"(Portentous sight!) the owlet Atheism,
Sailing on obscene wings athwart
the noon . . . "

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America by James Turner, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life by Robert N. Bellah *et al.*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Individualism is the question of first concern to the future of the West. The dread argument of the individual case is, I think, the fundamental idea of modernism. Books like those by Turner and Bellah & Associates which deal with this question have significance, however, only within the framework already constructed by some of the finest minds of the past 150 years. It is necessary to review at least the broad outlines of that framework before the value of these works can be determined.



Man's worship of himself became possible because of two related but conflicting reasons. One, the Founder of the Christian religion gave infinite value to the person, a being worthy in His eyes of His death. This central liberating truth, fully and incontrovertibly proclaimed in history, is unique. Two, by the time of the Renaissance the inevitable workings of mankind's weakness made themselves felt in secular humanism, the ideology in which the person is perceived as the center of reality and, hence, the compelling image of culture. This shift is so profound that Lionel Trilling held that a mutation in the human psyche had taken place then, making it possible for man to see himself as at the center.

By this shift the Christian sense of person was anamorphosized into individualism. The Christian West had hit upon that object of all objects most worthy to replace God. The point was, as Auguste Comte noted, that once God was shut out, His place must be taken by something else if you did not want Him to come back again. Atheism, oddly made possible only after Christ, is in its most consistent form when holding that man takes the place of God because he must not owe his existence to anybody except himself. The most powerful ideologies of our own time, often in competition, are alike in agreeing on this doctrine.

This deep-laid distortion of the meaning of personality led to the deliberate transference over the past four centuries of all value from "other worldly" to "this worldly." Such a basal shift shaped itself finally into an ultimate opposition. As Walker Percy put it, two gods are one god too many for the cosmos. In such a situation it is impossible to be neutral. The place from where we start as we face the world determines our judgments and our moral principles. Hence, the idea is no longer shocking that the opposition should be between God and man. We do not expect bolts of lightning to fall from the heavens or the very stones to cry out, and, alas, if they do, we do not hear them. Where theism tried and failed, positive humanism offered the needed remedy, the something completely new. The undergraduate commencement orator at the University of Wisconsin (1875) spoke for Modernism when he said, "THE KINGDOM OF MAN IS AT HAND."

Or so its supporters believed then. The shocking experience of the past four centuries, however, so different than anticipated, caught up with the times and forced a radical review of positive humanism. For one, the new religion of man had no way of dealing with the primitive terror—elemental, violent, untamed—which is in the individual and in society. And by the 19th century, the authority of personality, one of the great achievements of Christianity, was undermined and exhausted by being forced to play a role it could never master. Its flutters of independence could not cure the wound of the heart. That Jones should wind up worshiping Jones turned out to be as peccant as G.K. Chesterton promised it would be.

Genesis had defined the essential temptation (and the cause of the Fall): "You will be like God." In the great tradition of literature, this argument of the individual case is always a *dread* argument. Whenever characters in such high dramas plead the dread argument of the individual case, claiming that they are responsible to no tribunal but themselves, they inevitably find themselves facing the abyss. Let Anna Karenina, the most glamorous exemplar of the 19th century, stand for all of them.

James Turner is not as interested in literature as he is in letters. Using such documents he aims to explain in *Without God, Without Creed* how it became possible for many people in the

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19th century and thereafter to say, "I do not believe in God." Before that time "atheism or agnosticism seemed almost palpably absurd." For all practical purposes, America before 1800 does not seem to have harbored a single person who did not believe in God. Thereafter, and quickly, unbelief emerged as a plausible choice for millions. Without God, without creed, "the center fell out of intellectual life." Although to this day most Americans continue to believe in God (or say they do), the option of unbelief in itself shattered the common basis of thought and experience. Making God private meant that public intellectual life could do without Him.

The aggressive self-assertion of man demanding independence resulted in his claiming the supremacy that belonged to God. When the cart is once pushed over the brow, there is no telling it to stop. Doing without God meant that the image which gave order to culture, an all-or-nothing proposition as the First Commandment made crystal clear, was declared redundant, and the consequences swept through the body politic like the shock waves of an earthquake. In considering how the practically universal assumption of God disappeared, Turner concentrates on Anglo-American culture, focusing on United States Protestantism after 1800 in particular. Since Protestantism arose at the beginning of modern times, it is much closer to the dynamic which produced Modernism than Catholicism is. It more readily opened itself to the powerful currents of modern thought as well as found its shape in part by confronting them.

Contrary to common belief, neither science nor social transformations caused unbelief; religious leaders were the culprits. By adapting belief to cultural changes and the discoveries of science, "the defenders of God slowly strangled Him." The history of the 19th-century Protestant *aggiornamento* in the United States is the most original aspect of Turner's study. Because of Pius IX's vigorous response to these same forces, the Catholic *aggiornamento* would be delayed for a century.

Before 1500 in Europe, belief in God was fixed in the very structure of things. The estrangement from reality necessary to support unbelief was a practical impossibility. With the Renaissance and the Reformation came the application of positivism, the empirical way of thought. The only reliable knowledge was that verified in experience. Logically formulated and exactly specified propositions satisfied the desire for precise knowledge—the technological habit of mind. Undergirding these ideas was the progressive belief in the historical evolution of knowledge. The result was the rationalizing of religion. Belief became moralized and morality became humanized. "I believe in nothing," said Leslie Stephens, "but I do not the less believe in morality." Benjamin Franklin provided the classic example of this mode of thought: "Vicious actions are not hurtful because they are forbidden, but forbidden because they are hurtful, the nature of man alone considered."

The Ten Commandments were reduced to two moral ideas, progress and humanitarianism. The first idea presupposed that man had made so much intellectual progress that he *ought* not to believe anything any longer without sufficient evidence of the proper kind. As to the second, one need consider only the theological flight from the

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perennial problem to which religion had always responded—suffering. Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. asserted that "suffering is a wrong which can be and ought to be prevented." Both ideas are, necessarily, man-centered, the result of a new appreciation of personality which, unchecked, came to be individualism. Since it was the individual and not God who made choices, belief in the supernatural became offensive to one's moral sensibility. Submission to any external authority "endangered the moral integrity" of the person. "To vindicate liberty I must dethrone God," said Samuel Putnam.

Mainstream Protestantism in the United States encouraged the moralizing of God because of its strategy of making religion conform to the demands of the modern world. The notion that it is the world which opposed itself to Christianity was put aside. One did not dare to be in opposition to what the prevailing culture regarded as obvious, natural, and plausible. God became merely a part of history, not as He had in the Incarnation but as if He was a part of creation:

> The great error of church leaders—their blasphemy, to put it in their terms—was to forget the tension that must exist between man's wishes and the intentions of a Deity who might plausibly be imagined to have created our universe. They had let gather dust the ancient wisdom that creation transcended human grasp.

At this point the Comte thesis came into play. A secular morality was possible only if a new central compelling image for culture was available; the new idea of man was available. Work in anthropology and archaeology demonstrated in purely natural terms that man evolved his morality by living in response to nature. Morals are the expression of "the secular experience of mankind." The guardians of belief had made God so much like man that it became feasible to abandon God and believe in man alone.

In short, God as the ruler of nature was abstracted into a scientific explanation. God as the source for the code of moral behavior was humanized. God as mysterious and transcendent was tamed and made to appear irrelevant to human needs. These changes came about because church leaders and intellectuals chose to deal with modernity by embracing it. What modernity wanted as a functional God could not be made compatible with a transcendent God.

At bottom, this error resulted from a radical misunderstanding of Incarnation, the historical event which gave flesh to the Still Point about which the universe turns. In *Four Quartets* T.S. Eliot named Incarnation the impossible union of timeless and time. And for us who are trying, the timeless can be found only in time. Thus, history is not progress or evolution or mere addition, but a pattern of timeless moments. Hence, all of us have had the experience but missed the meaning, yet in the effort to find the meaning the experience can be purified. Although God is not owned by history, if you take Him out of it—separate Him from hunks, colors, gardens, and garbage dumps—you lose Him, having missed the whole point of the free truth of Revelation, which is Christ Incarnate in history. The true distinction (and marriage) of divine and human can be found only through the revelation of the impossible union—that essential paradox.

Turner's sense of an incomprehensible God and of the hopeless fallibility of human effort to know Him threatens to jeopardize his otherwise sound study. An essential part of God's transcendent mystery is that He did reveal Himself in time in the person of the Son who is like us in all things but sin. As a result of His coming, we have not been left orphans. The conclusion that can be drawn from the rest of his study, however, is of great value. The Protestant *aggiornamento*, which is still going on particularly in mainstream Protestantism, is presented lucidly. Turner's final words are cautionary; in 1986 they can be read as applying equally to the Catholic *aggiornamento*: "Yet perhaps after all, there is really one lesson here. The universe is not tailored to our measurements. Forgetting that, many believers lost their God. So may we all run into trouble."

Habits of the Heart is also concerned with individualism, and one wishes that it had been a better book. Written in jejune prose, it hardly seems to know that it is asking the right question: Given the cancerous effect of modern American individualism, how can we preserve or create a morally coherent life? It is difficult to imagine a group of writers less likely than Bellah & Associates to consider such a question. They think the answer is to be found in taking a survey. Four research projects are the models within which the answer can be found. But of course the answer is already in their heads. Some 200 persons were interviewed, half of whom were Californians, half of them being therapists or in therapy, and the third quarter were political activists who come from the left side of the political spectrum. I thought of the Kinsey Report. Another method was wanted, and I make bold to recommend it to them. Study St. Augustine. I think he offers what Bellah & Associates were looking for. "'Bad times, troublesome time,' thus men are saying. Let our lives be good and our times will be good. We make our times what we are." On second thought, I wonder if Bellah & Associates would be willing to embrace the base on which St. Augustine stood and which was the source of his wisdom.

BOOKS IN BRIEF—EDUCATION

None of the Above: Behind the Myth of Scholastic Aptitude **by David Owen, Boston: Houghton Mifflin; $16.95.** A leftist attack on the elitism of the Educational Testing Service. Owen does a splendid job of uncovering the bias and stupidity of the testing bureaucracy which has boiled down all the world's learning to a choice of A, B, C, or D—a welcome contribution to the current debate.

Last Chance for Our Children: How You Can Help Save Our Schools **by Bill Honig, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley; $12.95.** A practical nuts-and-bolts approach to educational reform by the California Superintendent of public education. While Honig has written an eminently useful guide for parents, he gives little evidence of original thought or of a positive vision of how eduction should function. The low style and level of discourse throughout are highly unsuitable in an author professing an attachment to excellence in education.

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Faith and Empathy *by Jonathan Chaves*

"Well, I do believe some things, of course . . . and therefore, of course, I don't believe other things."
—G.K. Chesterton, *The Incredulity of Father Brown*

The Chinese Rites Controversy From Its Beginning to Modern Times **by George Minamiki, S.J., Chicago: Loyola University Press.**

The progressive turning away from belief in God that characterized Western intellectuals during the 19th century continues, alas, in the 20th. This intellectual shift has often been attributed to the triumphs of science and to the theories of Marx, Freud, and Darwin. But the rise of modern skepticism may also be traced to increasing awareness through textual, anthropological, and folkloric study of non-Judaic and non-Christian cultural traditions with ancient and quite sophisticated religious systems of their own. Deciding whether Western skepticism was primarily a cause or an effect of ever-increasing fascination with the East—a fascination both aesthetic and philosophical in nature—is, to be sure, something like resolving the chicken-or-egg problem. But confrontation with the Orient has forced modern man to wonder: "If there exist in fact *several* traditions offering exhaustive explanations for life and man's place in the universe, who is to say that our own has any monopoly on the truth—or indeed that it is correct at all? Could it be that men have simply created more or less arbitrary explanations to account for the apparently inexplicable condition in which they find themselves? Could it be that none of these 'religions'—our own included—has any right to lay claim to authority?"

Such musings suit ideological atheists perfectly, for obvious reasons. All they need to do is to sit back and allow skeptical questioning to continue to undermine belief. But how is the intellectual who would like to see a resurgence of faith to proceed? Is he to ground himself in a fundamentalism which simply asserts the rightness of one religion and the consequent wrongness of all others? Or is he to embrace an ecumenical position so tolerant as to deny any essential differences between religions? That this issue poses one of the primary moral dilemmas of the 20th century was already fully recognized by G.K. Chesterton in the first decade of the century (see *Heretics* [1905] and *Orthodoxy* [1908]), and it is a problem as yet unresolved today.

In his fine new book on the so-called Chinese rites controversy, George Minamiki has a far more modest agenda than the resolution of this intractable problem. Yet his superbly researched and lucid exposition of the controversy may help to foster discussion of the proper balance between faithful adherence to a creed and empathetic tolerance for other religions. The experience of missionaries who served in China provides a provocative case study. Beginning with the great Matteo Ricci (1522-1610), the missionaries found themselves confronted with a most difficult question: Should they allow Chinese converts to Christianity to continue to participate in those rituals which helped define Chinese social life? This question led naturally to a still more fundamental one: Were these rituals to be seen as essentially religious (in which case they would have to be interpreted as contravening the First Commandment), or were they to be seen as merely "civil" (i.e., lacking any sense of worship of a sacred object,

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a deity or a soul) and therefore permissible? As Minamiki points out, the discussion of this problem in some papal bulls and other early sources anticipates Robert N. Bellah's attempt to define a "civil religion," a phrase which itself raises the related question of whether it is appropriate to speak of a "religion" which lacks an ontology of the sacred.

The Chinese rituals in question included burning incense and offering flowers and slaughtered sacrificial animals to Confucius in special "temples" (*miao*), and bowing down or kowtowing to images of Confucius or to "spirit tablets" (*shen wei*) understood to symbolize his presence and that of his disciples. Similar procedures addressed to family and clan ancestors were enacted in the home before ancestral altars bearing spirit tablets or in the semipublic ancestral halls. Those who refused to participate in such rituals risked conflict with their families, their communities, and indeed with society in general. Virtual ostracism was a likely result. The Church was thus faced with the problem of balancing the desire for new converts of unimpeachable practice with the risk of antagonizing or even alienating an entire society, thereby endangering the very enterprise of conversion.

Minamiki, limiting himself to a discussion of the Jesuits and other Catholic missionaries, traces the labyrinthine and often confusing interchanges of views between the missionaries in the field and the relevant papal offices (especially the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide). Most of the missionaries favored flexibility in allowing participation of their converts in certain rituals, but the papacy leaned toward a strict enjoinment from such participation. In a bull of 1742, *Ex Quo Singulari*, Benedict XIV effectively ended the debate by decreeing that all missionaries to the East take an oath including the words "To the best of my ability I shall never allow that the Chinese rites and ceremonies . . . be put into practice by the [Chinese] Christians." Various ambiguities and qualifications in *Ex Quo Singulari* and other directives were nevertheless interpreted by some missionaries as loopholes allowing them a limited degree of flexibility.

The whole question resurfaced two centuries later when the militaristic Japanese government and its puppet regime in Manchukuo endeavored to create a state ideology by revivifying a somewhat distorted version of Confucianism and converts to Christianity found themselves pressured to participate in various public rituals. This time, the governments themselves testified to the purely "civil" character of these rituals. In a series of decrees culminating in 1939 in *Plane compertum est*, the papacy essentially accepted the notion that these rites had now evolved into civil and not religious events (although they may have been religious in nature at one point in remote history) and that converts could participate in them in good conscience. *Plane compertum est* also nullified the oath by which missionaries had pledged themselves to enjoin their converts from participation in the rituals, an oath which had continued to be administered to new missionaries in the course of the two preceding centuries.

Minamiki himself is clearly on the side of a more ecumenical approach. He quotes with approbation George H. Dunne's view that papal actions against Chinese participation in Confucian rites had been "a death blow to the cause of Christianity in China." Had Christian missionaries been allowed freer rein in reaching accommodation with Confucian ritual practices, Minamiki suggests, they might have been able to achieve greater success in attracting converts. He argues that "with the advance of ethnology, sociology, and comparative religion . . . their [the rites'] symbolism and meaning would not be judged simply from the standpoint of European and Judeo-Christian culture." The implication seems to be that if only the popes and their counselors had enjoyed access to the insights of these disciplines, they might have been more flexible.

But is it not possible that the popes were right in supposing that there actually *is* a sense of the sacred and therefore a religious character in Confucianism? If this is so, then we are faced with the kind of hard religious choice modern man prefers to avoid: Where are we to take our stand, given the virtual smorgasbord of religions available to us in the "global village" of today? Sooner or later, we must confront the question that C.S. Lewis asked when someone told him that all religions worship the same God: "Yes, but which one?" If we cannot reconcile ourselves to the idea that one particular faith is *right* and the others *wrong*, then must we simply accept them all in one vast ecumenical embrace?

I do not know the answer to this question. But for now I would like to

BOOKS IN BRIEF—RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

History of the Concept of Time by Martin Heidegger, translated by Theodore Kisiel, Bloomington: Indiana University Press. A first English translation, with helpful notes and a glossary of terms, of a 1925 lecture course on time by one of this century's most profound—and difficult—philosophers.

The Definition of Moral Virtue by Yves R. Simon, edited by Vukan Kuic, New York: Fordham University Press. A friend and student of Jacques Maritain provides a refreshingly lucid look at the philosophical status of virtue and concludes that our intuitive sense ("I smell a rat") often proves a better guide to good and evil than any logical casuistry.

The Collected Works of G.K. Chesterton, Vol. I, *Heretics, Orthodoxy, The Blatchford Controversies*, edited by David Dooley; San Francisco: Ignatius. Two books and some collected essays by the pugnacious Christian who shook up Fleet Street by taking on the great pagans of late Victorianism.

The Bible and the Narrative Tradition, edited by Frank McConnell, New York: Oxford University Press; $16.95. Harold Bloom, Frank Kermode, Hans Frei, and others take a look at the Bible as poetry, rhetoric, and narrative. No wonder T.S. Eliot and C.S. Lewis both had doubts about the literary approach to the Bible.

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express the fervent wish that we set our sails to pass safely between the Scylla of willful blindness to such cultures as that of China, in the hope that such xenophobia will help us restrengthen our fraying Western roots, and the Charybdis of undiscriminating empathy for other religious cultures, in the desperate hope of relocating Ithaca (or several Ithacas!) elsewhere. For those interested in other cultures today, the greater of the two dangers appears to be not intolerance, but, on the contrary, intoxication with the differences at the expense of responsible exploration (such as that initiated by C.S. Lewis) for the ground of common belief.

REVISIONS

Physicists & Publicists

After visiting England in the early 18th century, Voltaire reported in his *Letters Concerning the English Nation* that the entire country was abuzz with talk about the genius of the man who had captured gravity in a formula. Yet there were "few who read Newton . . . owing to its requiring much learning to be able to comprehend him." Even greater erudition is required today to penetrate the professional articles and books written by leading researchers in astrophysics or evolutionary biology. But just as Voltaire popularized Newtonian physics by translating the equations into a philosophical perspective alien to Newton's own thought, contemporary *vulgarisateurs* of science cannot resist the temptation to smuggle in their own metaphysical conjectures along the way.

The Unfinished Universe by Louise B. Young (New York: Simon and Schuster; $17.95) is a case in point. Young has made a career of writing about science for laymen as a science editor and as author of such works as *Earth's Aura* and *The Blue Planet*. She does a fair job of outlining the latest theories of the Big Bang, of explaining new ideas about evolutionary dynamics, and of covering the debate among cosmologists over the final fate of the universe. Aside from the inevitable oversimplification, the chief problem with the book is Young's attempt to pass off her own quasi-religious Big Picture as scientifically respectable. Young finds it distasteful that the Second Law of Thermodynamics is as stern as the Prophets in promising that "the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment." This gloomy notion is "blocking the development of more positive views of the physical world." Young wants "positive concepts . . . capable of bringing about a resurgence of belief in ourselves." The creation as a Dale Carnegie course!

Like most modern pantheists, Young wants to have it both ways. She denies that evolution has been supernaturally directed towards any predestined end—that would be the heresy of orthogenesis. Yet she wants to believe that order and progress are somehow inscribed in the heart of the atom. Christianity proved useful by providing a "doctrine of positive change" essential to a theory of progressive evolution, but Christian transcendence must be discarded, even if that means throwing out every plausible explanation for mind, consciousness, or sin. To hear Young tell it, the evils of a Stalin or a Hitler are one with the inconvenience of tapeworms or viruses.

To her credit, Young does turn many cold scientific issues into engaging human questions. At times she writes with a passionate appreciation for the beauty and wonder of nature. Pantheist devotion is often more appealing than materialist skepticism: John Keats is a better read than Herbert Spencer. But most readers will eventually tire of the untidy sentimentality.

Unfortunately, Young is right when she complains that most scientists are "specialists, dealing with very narrow segments of the physical world, and they do not regularly concern themselves with broad philosophical problems." This insouciance about first principles prevalent among scientists permits popularizers like Young or ideologues like Jeremy Rifkin to set the tone of public dialogue about the sciences. We need only turn to the work of Stephen Jay Gould or R.C. Lewontin to see how far science may be politicized, and any number of otherwise sober biologists end up echoing the half-baked ideas about progressive evolution promulgated by tenderminded publicists.

This careless and secondhand approach to philosophy leaves distinguished physicists and molecular biologists open to the attack Mary Midgley mounts in *Evolution as a Religion: Strange Hopes and Stranger Fears* (New York: Methuen). Midgley admits that the "distortions" of evolution into a substitute religion are typically confined to "remarks [that] appear in the opening or closing chapters of books," usually trade books, and that the scientists who write this stuff regard it as mere "flannel for the general public." It is somewhat disingenuous of her to extract only the purple passages from otherwise careful and useful books. But she is justified in exploring the implications. Why *do* rigorous scientists pick up their vision of human destiny off the supermarket magazine rack? What it reveals, in fact, is the *religion* of evolution, a system of superstition older than Darwin.

In fact, the mystical "evolutionism" of a Teilhard de Chardin is at odds with the ruthless materialism of natural selection. The roots of Darwinism go deep into the history of science—back to Aristotle and Empedocles—while evolutionism is the fanciful creation of progressive optimists like Condorcet. The former must be judged critically: It will stand or fall by the evidence. The latter, however, is a moral and spiritual heresy which deserves to be extirpated by the gentle methods of the Inquisition.

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Ez and Old VORT

by Brian Murray

***Pound/Lewis: The Letters of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis*, edited by Timothy Materer, New York: New Directions; $37.50.**

Among Wyndham Lewis' nearly 50 books are found such classics as *Time and Western Man* (1927) and the novels *Tarr* (1918), *The Apes of God* (1930), and *The Revenge For Love* (1937). But at the time of his death in 1957, Lewis was probably better known for his persona than for his writings or the brilliant paintings and drawings that he also produced for more than four decades. In fact, for too many students of modern literature, the name Wyndham Lewis continues to evoke little more than the image of the sneer-and-sombrero wearing "Enemy" who allegedly backed Hitler and smeared Jews and who—according to anecdotes left behind by Ernest Hemingway and others—enjoyed nothing more than getting into brawls on street corners and at literary teas.

An older and wiser Lewis recognized that he was personally responsible for much of the growth of his unsavory reputation. In the 1920's and early 30's—when he was far edgier, less secure—Lewis put on a tough-guy pose and, in essays and conversations, didn't hesitate to bludgeon his opponents whenever his pistol failed to fire. During this period he also wrote appreciatively of those movements hatched by the Mssrs. Hitler, Mosely, and Mussolini. Apparently convinced that such fellows would not only ward off the Russians but grant a privileged role to such men of genius as himself, Lewis announced—in *The Art of Being Ruled* (1926)—that "the disciplined fascist party in Italy can be taken as representing the new and healthy type of 'freedom'"; that, moreover, "for anglo-saxon countries as they are constituted today some form of fascism would probably be best."

Like Ezra Pound—or like T.S. Eliot or H.L. Mencken, for that matter—Lewis was never able to express unqualified praise for democracy in its 20th-century form. But quite unlike the increasingly unstable Pound, Lewis frequently and vigorously condemned fascism as it became clear that Germany and Italy were engulfed in insanity and careening toward national suicide. Lewis savaged Der Fuehrer in *The Hitler Cult* (1939); he exposed some of the dangers and absurdities of anti-Semitism in the ironically titled *The Jews: Are They Human?* (1939).

After the war, Lewis went after "the present archaic division into 'nations'" of what "are really competing businesses, each with increasingly devastating weapons." Aligning himself with the likes of Henry Wallace, Lewis propagandized for the establishment of something like a one-world government—"not a Utopia," he made clear, "just somewhere in which armed groups are not incessantly menacing each other, and throwing all ordered society back into primitive savagery every few years."

Despite his suspicion of democracy and his disdain for "the horrors of Hollywood," Lewis was thoroughly convinced that the United States was the perfect model for his "novel cosmopolis." The U.S.—writes Lewis in *America and Cosmic Man*—is "a place where those conditions of fraternisation and free intercourse, irrespective of race, class, or religion, already prevail, or enough at least for a start."

As he became a booster of both the U.S. and of what Clare Booth Luce described as "globaloney," Lewis also grew steadily more skeptical of politicians and theorists who looked at collective schemes as a means of assuring economic salvation and social calm.

The meditations and short stories in *Rotting Hill* (1951) express Lewis' fear that, in Britain, well-intentioned followers of Bevin, Attlee *et al.* were doing little but setting up "an assembly-line world" and a vast governmental apparatus that could easily be abused. "The danger," notes Lewis in *Rotting Hill*, is that "in its hour of triumph socialism will forget, ignore, or violently discard the ethics by means of which it was able to gain acceptance and mount to power: indeed that it may strip away all our civilized Christian freedoms and thrust back into a system of villainy and worse. Socialism without ethics is a terrible thing."

In fact, quite unlike Pound, Lewis as he aged became increasingly interested in orthodox Christianity. In several pieces in *Rotting Hill*, he frets about the collapse of Christian belief in post-war Britain; in *The Red Priest* (1956), a novel, he unsympathetically portrays an egomaniacal Anglican clergyman who is far more interested in fame and power than in the humble performance of his priestly obligations. *Monstre Gai* (1955) and *Malign Fiesta* (1955)—the final volumes of Lewis' *The Human Age* trilogy—take place in a brilliantly rendered afterlife and focus on a once-famous satirist named James Pullman, whose arrogance and contempt for common humanity cause him to become an associate of the Devil and a prime candidate for eternal roasting. Indeed, when he set out to complete *The Human Age*, Lewis observed in a letter to a friend that "as a theologian I am inferior to what Eliot is supposed to be." "That," he explained, "must be remedied."

Lewis and Pound met in London in 1909. Lewis was 27, Pound 24; both were energetic, combative, and eager to rid the arts of lingering standards and practices established in the days of Macaulay and Millais. Lewis thus completed the Nietzschean *Tarr*; Pound produced Imagist verse and worked overtime promoting the work of Lewis, James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, and countless other writers, painters, and sculptors whose work he admired. Together Lewis and Pound launched Vorticism—a literary and artistic movement which drew some inspiration from both Futurism and Cubism, and which stated its tenets in Lewis' short-lived, puce-jacketed journal, *Blast*.

Lewis and Pound never again worked as closely as they did in the years just before the First World War. Eventually, they found themselves separated by a great many miles, and by conflicting biases on a wide range of issues. Hence we find Lewis in 1946 reminding Pound that "what appeals to you—the historical—leaves me cold"; that "I enjoy many things that have not the same appeal to you: the wonderful landscapes met with everywhere in America: and simple pleasant people (butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers) whom you would despise."

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Still, the two remained friends and off-and-on correspondents. In *Pound/Lewis*, Timothy Materer has collected in chronological order more than 200 notes and letters that were passed between these controversial figures between the year of their meeting and the late 50's, when Pound signed off as "Ez" and Lewis as "Old VORT." Most appear in print for the first time; many are detailed, revealing, and quite amusing. All are carefully glossed and introduced by Materer, whose characteristic intelligence and lucidity combine to make *Pound/Lewis* a splendid contribution to literary scholarship and a very good read.

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Us and Them

by Michael Warder

Inside Stalin's Secret Police: NKVD Politics, 1936-1939 **by Robert Conquest, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press.**

Soviet Defectors: The KGB Wanted List **by Vladislav Krasnov, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press.**

American diplomats, foreign policy experts, and politicians desperately want to believe that the Soviet leaders are essentially like us and that, fundamentally, they want the same things as we do.

The Soviets encourage this kind of thinking with their proposals for disarmament, trade, and détente, and with their laments over the madness of the current arms race and the millions of Russians who perished in the last world war.

But while the Soviets beat their breasts about the 20 million dead in World War II, they remain tight-lipped and silent about the estimated 30 to 70 million citizens killed by the Soviet secret police on orders from the Communist Party. That is why *Inside Stalin's Secret Police: NKVD Politics 1936-1939* by Robert Conquest is an important book. A short book, dense with names, dates, appendices, and footnotes, *Inside Stalin's Secret Police* traces the demise of NKVD (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs) leader Genrikh Yagoda in the autumn of 1936 and the ascent of Nikolai Yeshov as head of the secret police. In studying available official and *Samizdat* sources, Conquest uncovers the sequence of events which led to Yeshov's subsequent fall from power and the rise of Lavrenti Beria in late 1938. What Stalin achieved in this time period can be considered in many respects as dramatic a change as the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

Between 1936 and 1938, 70 percent of the Central Committee and half of the Politburo were shot. In the one-year period beginning in the spring of 1937, an estimated 3,000 NKVD officers were killed. Within two years Stalin personally approved 383 execution lists prepared by Comrade Yeshov, condemning over 400,000 people including several thousand of Russia's highest ranking military leaders and their wives.

Not only did Stalin liquidate all potential rivals, he also killed off the old-timers like A.S. Kiselev whose only crime was that they could remember what communism had meant before Stalin took over. Harder to document than these killings of party, army, and secret police leaders is the extermination of rank-and-file party members and citizens. How does a scholar determine the precise results of telegrams to NKVD chiefs in the provinces that say: "Exterminate 10,000 [or 15,000] enemies of the people"? In any case, Conquest has assessed those numbers and their significance in *The Great Terror* (1973). His purpose in this book is to analyze the political dynamics within a group of torturers and executioners, so fundamental to the modern police state.

Conquest's challenge is to determine how Stalin could kill so much of his leadership so quickly, even as he killed off the executioners.

When Stalin began to solidify his rule in the early 1930's he determined that the powerful and cohesive secret police must be destroyed. Through transfers, phony trials, patronage promotions, and executions, he split the NKVD, creating a new faction under Nikolai Yeshov, who had none of Genrikh Yagoda's professional background. Once the new NKVD had completed the purge of the party, the secret police, and the army, Stalin had only to arrange the execution of Yeshov and his henchmen. Of the 92 NKVD central and provincial leaders in 1938, only 10 survived into 1939. Once the bloodletting was finished, Stalin became a hero for ridding the Soviet Union of Yeshov —whose evils were ascribed to private ambition and egomania. Lavrenti Beria took over the NKVD using the same techniques of transfer, phony trials, awards, promotions, and executions, but most of the dirty work had been done.

Americans still find it incredible that Stalin would weaken his country by executing his political, military, and intellectual leadership at a time of grave military threat from Germany. But no one has yet survived as a Soviet leader who considered anything above his own quest for power. The Soviet leaders we have seen since Stalin—Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and even Andropov and Chernenko—have all been the heirs of the purges. Even a man like Gorbachev, born in 1930, was elected to the Politburo in 1978 by Brezhnev, Andropov, Chernenko, and the influential Mikhail Suslov—a party secretary and Politburo member at the time Stalin ruled.

Written from a different perspective and employing different methods, Vladislav Krasnov's book, *Soviet Defectors*, also provides a wealth of insight into the values and character of the Soviet regime. A former employee of Radio Moscow who defected in 1962, Krasnov received his Ph.D. in Russian literature from the University of Washington.

In the past few years, there has been much sensational publicity about Soviet defectors, including Soviet UN diplomat Arkady Shevchenko and Oleg Gordiyevsky, a KGB station chief in London.

Krasnov approaches his subject—Soviet defectors since 1945—first by a review of the literature, such as it is, related to defections and what defectors themselves have written. Krasnov details the motivations for defection, describes conditions in the Soviet Union, and offers policy recommendations for the U.S.

The basis for much of Krasnov's book is a remarkable list compiled by the KGB of 470 persons who defected after World War II. Smuggled out of the Soviet Union and first published serially by the National Labor Union of Russian Solidarists in their monthly, *Possev*, between January 1977 and June of 1978, this list gives not only the names of the defectors but also updated biographical profiles of each person, complete with the sentences pronounced upon them following their defection.

These lists, corroborated by outside sources where possible, give us some understanding of the changing character of Soviet defectors. Under Stalin, defectors were usually poorly educated male military conscripts, mostly Russian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian. Under Khrushchev, the Berlin Wall made it more difficult for Soviet soldiers to defect. Ship-jumping by the sailors

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in the merchant marine increased, though, and the non-Slavic nationalities defected in greater numbers than before.

The KGB list ends in 1969, but Krasnov has searched available sources to give us an accurate picture of defectors since then. In the 1970's, 300,000 Soviets, mostly Jews, immigrated legally. This wave of immigration, tied to détente, the pressure of dissidents, and Western publicity, ended in 1979. Nonetheless, Krasnov lists 230 defectors who have come out of the cold since 1969—a rate of defection higher than the pre-1969 era. In 1984 alone there were 25 documentable cases.

Defectors in this post-1969 era tend to be better educated than before, reflecting the increased travel opportunities in scientific, academic, cultural, and sport exchanges. More women have made it out in recent years, but males still escape much more frequently.

Death sentences are listed for almost half of the defectors on the pre-1969 list, but professionals and intelligence specialists are usually shown more clemency. Apparently Soviet leaders consider at least some defectors to be more valuable alive than dead.

On the pre-1969 KGB list, about one in 20 of the defectors worked for the KGB or GRU. Some defectors are listed as cooperating with "foreign" intelligence services after defection, but Krasnov estimates that no more than 10 percent of the defectors have had an experience in spying prior to defection. He knows of only one case out of 700 where a defector—Ivan Rogalsky—has been proved to be a spy. As the case of Yuri Yurchenko showed, the defector as Soviet spy makes good newspaper copy, but such cases are rare. The Soviets do all they can to make defectors appear to be criminals, but the KGB charged almost none of the pre-1969 defectors with crimes other than defection.

Krasnov's chapter on "Defection and Détente" records numerous examples of defectors who never made it due to poor response on the part of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the State Department. The case of Simas Kudirka, the Lithuanian ship-jumper who was beaten in 1970 by the Soviets on a U.S. Coast Guard ship in U.S. territorial waters and returned to the Soviet ship, was a tragedy that should never have been repeated. But even after the establishment of new government mechanisms and procedures to deal with such cases, American officials still sadly mishandled Miroslav Medved when he recently tried to jump ship in the Mississippi River. Krasnov fears that such woeful lapses in judgment will continue until we see Soviet authorities as the thugs they are.

Krasnov wishes to alert the U.S. and other Western countries to the ways in which they might better plan for, take care of, and learn from defectors. He believes defectors should go public rather than seek a secret identity and start from scratch. The publicity, he believes, might protect them, and their professional background also might prove to be an asset rather than something to be hidden. Lacking family, friends, companionship, employment, and a knowledge of our system, is it any wonder that some defectors might think of returning to the Soviet Union? The U.S. interest is served by allocating more resources to assist defectors once they are here so they can contribute their talents and skills in their professions.

Defectors who have not gone underground could also do much to correct American misperceptions of the Soviet Union. Their reports, along with some of the information in Conquest's book on the Soviet secret police, might be more useful than reading any number of peace proposals.

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Madman in the Dock

by Christopher Muldor

Crime and Madness: The Origins and Evolution of the Insanity Defense **by Thomas Maeder, New York: Harper & Row.**

When John Hinckley was acquitted in 1982 for his attempted assassination of the President, the verdict galvanized opposition to the insanity defense. Some lawmakers wanted to restrict the use of the defense or even abolish it altogether. In *Crime and Madness* Thomas Maeder places the insanity defense and the recent challenges to it in historical perspective. Outrage over the Hinckley verdict, along with alarm over rising crime rates, inclined many to view the widespread use of the insanity defense as merely another manifestation of modern "soft" criminal justice. But Maeder argues that such a view is erroneous. For one thing, the number of defendants successfully using the insanity defense is small. More importantly, Maeder traces the insanity defense, in various forms, back to ancient times.

As Maeder makes clear, the insanity defense exists because crimes committed on account of madness cannot be treated in the same manner as other crimes. The law can dispense equal justice to all only by hypothesizing a "reasonable man" who is responsible for his actions. This hypothesis is plausible enough with most individuals, despite inevitable differences in intelligence, temperament, and other factors. But what of those properly classed as insane? Their mental disturbances and delusions set them apart from the overwhelming mass of humanity and make them more deserving of sympathy (and treatment, if it is feasible) than punishment.

Maeder traces the evolution of insanity law from the fragmentary evidence of early cases through the more substantial records of the English trials of the 18th and early 19th centuries up to the present day. The seminal case for modern Anglo-American jurisprudence was that of Daniel McNaughton; the resulting McNaughton Rule would in time become the law throughout the British Empire and in nearly every American state. Briefly stated, the McNaughton Rule established a strictly "cognitive" view of madness: an individual could be found insane only if, because of mental disease, he could not understand the nature of his act or recognize that it was wrong.

In recent decades, the insanity defense has come under attack from two different groups. Opponents of the insanity defense have claimed that it is too readily available to defendants and that it should be used only by those defendants whose mental disease is utterly beyond dispute. Among supporters of the insanity defense, on the other hand, many have complained that the McNaughton Rule is anachronistic and unhelpful, since it does not do justice to the noncognitive aspects of mental illness.

Maeder sees some merits on both sides of the issue but argues that the complexity of madness and crime precludes any extreme ideological solution. The insanity defense *can* be abused, but occasional abuses should not mean a universal ban. Because the release of mentally ill defendants can constitute a serious hazard to society, Maeder suggests ways to reduce the risks. He recognizes the limitations of the cognitive McNaughton Rule but points out that attempts to broaden the

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definition of mental illness in criminal cases have frequently had the effect of confusing the jury, as competing psychiatrists cloud the issues in a welter of incomprehensible jargon.

Maeder warns against the folly of abolishing the insanity defense so long as there are insane people. Such an abolition would likely result in either a merciless system of justice or an evasion of the law by judges and juries. One line of approach not suggested by Maeder, however, merits serious consideration: keep the insanity defense but place severe restrictions on the psychiatric testimony permitted at trials. The reasons for such an approach are suggested by a fascinating experiment by David Rosenhan and his colleagues in which several perfectly normal people secured admission to mental hospital wards by claiming to have heard voices. Once on the wards they stopped feigning mental illness and acted normally. *No staff psychiatrists* recognized the normalcy of these "patients," even though several *mental patients* did. How could such a thing happen? Psychiatrist Roy Grinker may have put his finger on the answer when he remarked that psychiatry has actually regressed from the 19th to the 20th centuries, as concern with inferences replaced concern with behavior. After all, a simple observation of *behavior* would have easily revealed Rosenhan's "patients" for who they were.

If the critique (by Medawar, Popper, Köhler, Eysenck, *et al.*) of the nonscientific character of much modern psychiatry is correct, the most plausible way out of the insanity dilemma may be to preserve the insanity defense while limiting evidence in support of insanity to observations of behavior patterns. The often neoscholastic and unilluminating psychiatric inferences on a subject's "mental" state could be eliminated with very little loss to anyone.

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Nailing Mailer

by Michael Fumento

The Victim's Song **by Alice R. Kaminsky, Buffalo: Prometheus Books.**

In 1979 Norman Mailer won the Pulitzer Prize and earned a small fortune with his sympathetic portrayal of murderer Gary Gilmore. Entitled *The Executioner's Song*, Mailer's book devoted 1,050 pages to the last days of the two-time murderer, and only 18 pages to the victims. A year later, 22-year-old Eric Kaminsky, a promising young musician, was mugged, slashed through the aorta, and thrown onto a New York subway track to die. Now, five years after, Eric's mother strikes back at Mailer, the muggers, New York City, God, and—well—virtually everybody. But despite many wasted shots, Alice Kaminsky's *The Victim's Song* manages to score many telling hits on deserving targets.

Alice Kaminsky, a professor of English at the State University of New York at Cortland, allows her bitterness to come through virtually every page. Yet most readers will tolerate the sharp, personal barbs and the endless self-pity because they have never known the pain of her position.

Kaminsky blasts New York City "as paradigm for all the cities in which violence is a pervasive and accepted phenomenon," and rips the criminal justice system. She reserves special treatment for New York Governor Mario Cuomo who, while refusing to force his individual beliefs regarding abortion on others because society has no antiabortion consensus, has four times vetoed capital punishment legislation which is clearly favored by a consensus of voters. Cuomo's daughter, son, and wife have been assaulted and robbed at various times in New York City, and his 79-year-old father-in-law was hospitalized after being severely beaten by muggers. A conservative may be a liberal who's been mugged, but liberal orthodoxy appears to survive assaults on closest kin.

Cuomo continues to make such statements as, "I do not believe that responding to violence with violence or death with death is the answer. It does not undo the loss." To which the Victim replies, "No one who argues for the death penalty uses this kind of irrelevant rhetoric. We kill a murderer to show that the life of an innocent person is worth more than the life of a murderer; we do it to punish him, to prevent him from killing again, and to express our moral outrage."

The hottest spot in Kaminsky's hell is reserved not for Mario Cuomo but for Norman Mailer. Kaminsky's attack on Mailer's prose style and artistic message, waged with a butcher's cleaver and not a scalpel, is unrelenting. Kaminsky accuses Mailer of romanticizing violence and the violent, complaining that Mailer deliberately fosters empathy for Gilmore by comparing him to a "tender, kind, scared rabbit" instead of "a monster . . . a snake."

She also indicts Mailer for getting Jack Abbott out of prison, only to murder Richard Adan, a promising young playwright working as a waiter, when denied use of the restaurant toilet. Mailer refused to abandon his protegé even after he murdered again; instead, he fingered—you got it—society, not to mention the fascist police state, the rich, and nuclear weapons.

Kaminsky's apparent theme, that her son Eric died for your sins—and yours and yours and yours—is a bit much. But the sense of outrage in *The Victim's Song* compels us to take a hard look at a modern culture in which murderers and novelists collaborate as partners in crime.

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Bashing the Baptists

by Judith Sears

Redemptorama: Culture, Politics, and the New Evangelicalism **by Carol Flake, Baltimore: Penguin Books.**

"Who are these people?" someone asks about evangelicals in the early pages of *Redemptorama*, a book billed as an exploration of Christ and contemporary culture. Despite years of research and her own Southern Baptist upbringing, the author, Carol Flake, offers only caricatures in response to the question.

The book is supposed to help sophisticates bewildered and appalled that evangelicals still exist, having supposed that Spencer Tracy (alias Clarence Darrow in *Inherit the Wind*) had taken care of them. However, Flake herself left behind Southern Baptism when she went to college because it "didn't seem to me then to be a very portable kind of religion—it seemed out of place, certainly, with the new clothes and the new books I had bought for college." Flake's safe aerie in the "bastion of secular humanists" was disturbed by the noisy entrance of the Religious Right on the national stage. Now she worries (with what sincerity we are entitled to question) that the increasing prosperity of evangelicals is threatening the "real community" of "clapboard churches" and "plain white steeples" she somehow remembers warmly (but never would have set foot in again if it hadn't been for the writing of this book). But the evangelical world didn't stop turning when Flake left; its endurance puts her

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newfound sophistication and tolerance to the test. She flunks.

In a candid and generous "Author's Note," Flake complains about the difficulty of writing about the religion she fled. As an ex-evangelical, I can understand some of her ambivalence. But the mixture of "criticism and kindness" she came up with as a solution to the dilemma is a peculiar and unpleasant concoction. This is the Mary Jane school of criticism: sarcastic bashing alternating with (what evangelical females are notorious for) "making nice."

The recurring charge of the book is that the Religious Right merely reflects the values of self-righteous, materialistic America instead of leavening the culture with the sacrificial values central to Christianity. One needn't go far for evidence of this. Evangelicals often seem to be the only remaining true believers in the middle class. Some of the "prosperity" advocates give the impression that Christ was crucified so that all Americans could have two-car garages.

Not only is this criticism true, but some of the noisiest to have voiced it are evangelicals. A few years back, for example, *Christianity Today* took a hard look at Robert Schuller's "possibility" preaching, which often bypasses unflattering doctrines like Original Sin in favor of psychic pep talks. Alternatively, people like Francis Schaeffer (to choose only one) have attempted to provide a more thoughtful grounding of evangelical belief and practice. Yet Schaeffer, whom Flake acknowledges as the "guru of fundamentalism" and who has had extensive popular influence, gets only a paragraph while the TV preachers Flake loves to despise ("Super Savers" she dubs them in one of the book's many tiresome flippancies) get an entire chapter. Of course, to deal with Schaeffer Flake would have to analyze an idea or two, rather than huffing and puffing about TV fund-raising. She'd also have to acknowledge that conservative evangelicalism has more variety and depth than she's letting on.

While some evangelicals display an absurd identification of their own notions of the American Way of Life with the Gospel of Christ, there is no denying the correctness of some of their impulses. But *Redemptorama* does nothing to distinguish the legitimate from the spurious in evangelical goals. Consider the "pro-family" agenda. Since Bill Moyers' February TV special on the breakdown of the black family, it is suddenly okay to talk about the damage done by family dissolution and even, heaven forfend, the value of chastity. But evangelicals have been fighting for this in the public arena for 20 years now. One could even call this stance prophetic—though Flake doesn't.

Flake does find some evangelicals she can admire: those, like the Sojourners community, who inhabit the McGovern wing of liberalism. For Flake has new allegiances and creeds that appear to prohibit certain perceptions. In his early career, Billy Graham was a "tent-rattling" evangelist with an unbecoming interest in the powerful in business and government; but when he wanders tentatively into the peace movement, Flake thinks she hears prophetic bells ringing. She quotes Senator Hatfield (R-OR) approvingly on the misuses of religion to justify national policy, however immoral, but cannot give him a full endorsement. He hasn't yet learned the entire New Left catechism:

> His conscience remained torn between Christ and Caesar, as he continued to vote right on most economic matters and left on most military issues.

So, if you identify with the political right, you're "encultured"; if you identify with the political left, you're Christian. Never mind transcendence. Never mind that voting left on economic matters means voting MORE power to Caesar. In fact, never mind anything but the fact that "they" are the Enemy.

Liberals like to cast the debate between themselves and conservative evangelicals as one between "theocracy" and "pluralism." But the lacunae in Flake's analysis tell a different tale. She recounts the gracious reception of Senator Kennedy at Falwell's Liberty Baptist College and does not neglect to mention the cries of "Nazi" with which the good, pluralistic undergraduates at Harvard had greeted Falwell a few months earlier. Yet the settled conviction of the book is that *evangelicals* have a "hunger for hegemony" and want to relieve America of its "shaggy and tangled pluralism." Again, on one page Flake reports, with apparent sympathy, the omission of religious books from best-seller lists and on the next charges that *evangelicals* have yet to recognize "the rights and needs of other groups who . . . also . . . claim America as their own."

Such blindness is not the result of a lack of "fairness," at least in surface reporting; it is indicative of a clash of creeds. Many people unthinkingly subscribe to some form of secular humanism as a religious attitude (what Walker Percy has called "a passionate conviction about man's nature, the world, and man's obligation in the world"). In this view, evangelicals are heretics. Flake left the bush league bigotry of Texas for the big leagues.

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BOOKS IN BRIEF—EVOLUTION

The Essential Darwin; selections and commentary by Kenneth Korey, Boston: Little, Brown; $10.95. An intelligent selection from Darwin's Evolution works, interspersed with useful comments on his life and intellectual evolution. Korey's volume (a contribution to Robert Jastrow's Masters of Modern Science Series) provides a solid introduction to Darwin's thought.

The Survival of Charles Darwin: A Biography of a Man and an Idea by Ronald W. Clark, New York: Random House; $19.95. A lively account of the life of Charles Darwin and of his theory. Clark's discussion is occasionally marred with anachronistic swipes at religion and a curious inability to accept natural selection. The blind spots lead to exaggerated praise of T.H. Huxley and Gould and Eldredge's theory of punctuated equilibria and a failure to appreciate Bishop Wilberforce, who was not "like most churchmen of his day scientifically illiterate." Indeed, like many churchmen (Darwin also studied for the ministry), Wilberforce was an amateur naturalist. Ronald Clark, it goes without saying, is a journalist.

Culture and the Evolutionary Process by Robert Boyd and Peter J. Richerson, Chicago: University of Chicago Press. An often bewildering attempt to grapple with the problem of cultural evolution. Boyd and Richerson have the irritating habit of belittling predecessors and competitors in an effort to overstate the novelty and significance of their own contribution. Their main argument, "that natural selection may act to reduce the importance of individual learning and increase that of cultural transmission," must await a more lucid and convincing demonstration.

The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution by Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell. State formation as an aspect of cultural evolution has received an enormous amount of attention. Corrigan and Sayer, in this badly written and ill-digested hodgepodge of secondary source criticism, misuse G.R. Elton's *Tudor Revolution* as the basis for a Marxian rewriting of English history.

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SCREEN

The Virgin and the Paparazzo

by Sam Karnick

***Hail Mary*; Directed by Jean-Luc Godard: A Gaumont/New Yorker Films release.**

The battle lines are drawn. On one side, Pope John Paul II and the French National Federation of Catholic Family Relations, along with numerous religious groups in this country. On the other, the American media, including *New York* magazine, the *New York Times*, Gannett newspapers, and many, many more.

The issue: Abortion? Nuclear weapons? Return to the Latin Mass? Liberation theology? Not this time. This time the fuss is about a *movie*, specifically *Hail Mary*, the latest offering from Jean-Luc Godard, a French filmmaker born in Switzerland 50 years ago. Godard was a member of the French "New Wave" film group in the late 50's and early 60's and since then has dabbled in Maoism, video, and, most recently, what he calls (in English) a "move" toward religion. He is certainly no stranger to controversy, and his latest film has stirred up a row which has forced religious figures to disport themselves as film critics and film critics to pretend to extraordinary sophistication as theologians.

As *Hail Mary* has made its way across America in the leisurely city-by-city pace typical of foreign films, American clergy, especially Catholic clergy, have been hard-pressed to decide whether to condemn it outright or to ignore it like Cardinal Bernadin of Chicago and organize prayer meetings in honor of the Virgin Mary.

Film critics, for their part, have been equally divided. Some have simply defended it on First Amendment grounds, while others have attempted to characterize the film as not only not irreligious but in fact a deeply religious film. In fact, says *New York* magazine's David Denby, *Hail Mary* is "one of the most tenderly religious movies ever made." Roger Ebert, speaking "as a Catholic" on TV's *At the Movies*, concurs.

Well, which is it? Foul blasphemy or deeply religious testament? As might be expected, it is neither. What it is is a heartfelt but deeply misguided attempt to make the story of the Immaculate Conception accessible to the modern mind.

Hail Mary is a perfect incarnation of the 20th century's characteristic disease: scientism, the discomfort with the unexplained, the mysterious, and the spiritual side of life. Perhaps the story of the Immaculate Conception *is* inaccessible to the modern mind. It would certainly seem so. But the problem is with the modern mind, not with the mysteries of creation. Godard's failing is that he has pitched his story toward the modern mind; it is a noble attempt that was doomed from the start.

It is not, of course, the story being told which has caused all the trouble, but rather the technique used in the telling. The aim of the film is always to demystify the story, to make it seem possible, to make everything more plausible to the earthbound 20th-century mind. The director has been remarkably single-minded in his narrative technique. He takes special pains to demystify Mary herself. (It is this element which has probably contributed most to making the film so offensive to Catholics.) Godard shows Mary playing basketball, working in her father's gas station, swearing, smoking cigarettes, using bright red lipstick, writhing in pain on her bed, and arguing with her boyfriend. Mary also spends much of the film in varying degrees of undress, although in the director's defense the nudity does not appear salacious.

Still, it seems quite unnecessary to include so much nudity and pain, however well-intentioned. We get the point: She's just your average, everyday teenage girl chosen by God to bear his only Son. Furthermore, there is one scene in which Mary swears furiously at God, accuses him of "using" her, and blasphemes angrily. The scene is passionate, dramatic, compelling, and terribly offensive. Worse yet, it doesn't ring true. Godard's Mary may be human, but it seems quite unlikely that the pain of her pregnancy and the terrible responsibility thrust upon her were not tempered by a sense of joy at the prospect of having a child and a sense of exaltation at being chosen to bear God's only Son. Whatever credibility the film has had among Christians up to this point dissipates completely.

The same single-mindedness applies to the treatment of the other characters. The director portrays Joseph as the quintessential cuckold. Joseph is at first understandably skeptical of Mary's claim, but soon becomes crazed with jealousy. He is faithful to her, and while he tries to convince Mary to go to bed with him, he doesn't try too hard, and eventually settles for just seeing her naked. A very tender relationship it is. But he also initiates vicious shouting matches and generally makes an ass of himself. It is not, all in all, a very flattering portrait.

Nor is the picture of the angel Gabriel. Gabriel wears sunglasses, dresses like a hipster and acts like a caricature of Belmondo—alternately tough and sensual. He also travels with a little girl who cues him when he forgets his lines. In addition to all this, there is a subplot in which a lecherous academic attempts to seduce Eve (yes, *that* Eve). The film is intended as a serious comedy, but the characters are too one-dimensional to be taken seriously.

Still, although much of the film is simple-minded and childish, there are

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elements of considerable power and insight to go along with the often-sophomoric humor. The film's exploration of the conflict between science and nature, logic and intuition, and knowledge and faith occasionally works: the shot of a tiny, distant airplane crossing the sun does succeed in evoking conception, man's conquest of the material world and his scientific triumphs, and the tininess of man's accomplishments (the plane) compared to the vastness of creation (the sun). In addition, the film's themes are synthesized remarkably well in the scenes involving Eve and the professor. The professor (for short, we'll call him "Satan") seduces Eve with knowledge: the "facts" about the origin of life on Earth, and consequently the true nature of man. Satan tells Eve that life was implanted on Earth from elsewhere in the Universe (Heaven?). "If you want to see an extraterrestrial," he says, "look in a mirror." His scientific explanations and animal charm win her over. But what has she gained? Knowledge. And what has she lost? Faith. It is a very successful translation of The Fall.

The relationship between Joseph and Mary also provides a nice moment of epiphany. Joseph, upset over the realization that he will forever be a footnote to his wife's story, says, "I'm going to be your shadow." To which Mary replies, "God's shadow: Isn't that what all men are?" All the themes of the film conjoin in that one image: that no man can bring life into the world, that God's Son was born of a human mother, and that all men are subjects of God. A director who could create such a moment surely couldn't have intended such blasphemies as are found elsewhere in the film, could he?

I don't think he could, and I don't think he did. In all the controversy over this film, one thing which has been forgotten is that there is a difference between depicting blasphemies and condoning them. Nobody complained when the Jews in DeMille's *The Ten Commandments* were shown building the golden ass, because the director clearly didn't condone the behavior. Similarly, while there is no indication in the Bible that Mary ever blasphemed against God, clearly Godard does not intend her blasphemies to be attributed to him as his own feelings. The scene is a mistake, and perhaps even an insult, but clearly not intended as blasphemy. Still, it is easy to see how viewers of the film, especially Catholics, with their great devotion to the image of the Virgin, might view the film as blasphemous.

In the end, both sides are right. *Hail Mary* is a deeply religious film, and it is also a vulgar, insulting sacrilege. It all depends on how you look at it. And that, after all, is the director's ultimate failure: that what was intended as a sincerely religious film could be plausibly interpreted as a scurrilously irreligious film. If Godard has not sinned in thought, he certainly has in word and deed.

Sam Karnick is a screenwriter who lives in Madison, Wisconsin.

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ART

Without a Barrel

by Caroline Morgan

Thundering through the Falls of Niagara is the overflow of all the Great Lakes except Lake Ontario. The combined waterpower of Horseshoe Falls and American Falls has been estimated at some four million horsepower. Both

"Niagara Falls (from above)" Watercolor on paper by Thomas Davies. At The New York Historical Society. January 22-April 27, 1986.

Falls drop more than 150 feet; their combined width is nearly four-fifths of a mile.

Even Oscar Wilde, like Sarah Bernhardt before him, was persuaded to put on an ungainly waterproof coat before strolling in the spray of these awesome waters. Thousands of other tourists arrived at the Falls in the 19th century. Henry James (no common tourist he) complained of the "horribly vulgar shops and booths and catchpenny artifices which have pushed and elbowed to within the very spray of the Falls."

Among these tourists appeared the painters, engravers, and photographers whose work graced The New York Historical Society this winter in "Niagara: Two Centuries of Changing Attitudes, 1697-1901." The catalog of the show reads like a "Who's Who" of the Hudson River School of landscape paintings.

The Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, organized the exhibition to celebrate the centenary of the Niagara Reservation, the oldest state park in America. The Corcoran's painting of the Falls by Frederic Edwin Church was the centerpiece of the show.

Like most of the representation of Niagara Falls in the exhibition, Church's work captures the aesthetic splendor but not the transcendent terror of the experience of Niagara. These artists have tamed Niagara as a symbol of power, just as modern technology has regulated the actual flow of the Niagara River. Only John Trumbull's eerie double panoramas of the Falls comes close to translating the spiritual significance of Niagara.

What we have forgotten is the way

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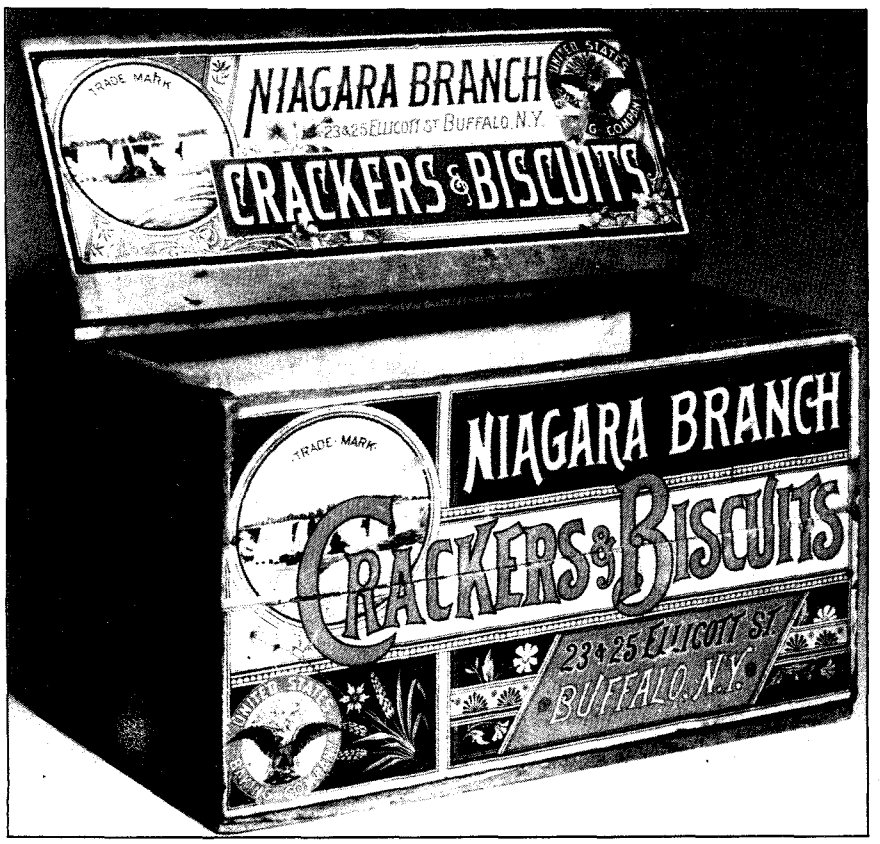
"Niagara Falls. Views of the American Fall, taken from Goat Island." Aquatint; painted and engraved by W.J. Bennet, 1831. At The New York Historical Society. January 22-April 27, 1986.

in which Niagara Falls once embodied the spirit of America, both here and abroad. Until the era of modern advertising—with its pitches for Niagara starch, Niagara biscuits, and other noble additions to the notion of Niagara—the sublime beauty and power of Niagara Falls represented the essence of the new American continent.

Europeans who made the pilgrimage to Niagara Falls went so far as to christen it a holy place, confirming what the Iroquois had known for ages. Visitors immersed themselves in the roaring wonder of Niagara. Nathaniel Hawthorne was mesmerized; Charles Dickens perceived an indelible "image of Beauty"; Harriet Beecher Stowe claimed that she sensed God in the perpetual rainbow at the Falls.

This exhibition, with its memorabilia and artifacts, teaches us that *anything* can be trivialized and exploited. We can only be grateful that Frederick Law Olmsted and the State of New York worked together back in 1895 to restore the Falls to their natural setting.



Niagara Branch Biscuit Box (1892), wood, metal, paper. Collection of Nabisco Brands Inc., Archivist.

STAGE

Growing Cotton and Communism on the Mexican Stage

by Francis Donahue

When a killer quake ripped through Mexico City last September, it crippled the young theater season then taking shape. In the aftermath of the national tragedy, playhouses went dark for a fortnight. Actors were idled and unpaid, and playgoers turned for sustenance to motion pictures and television drama. But the theater, fabulous invalid that it is, managed to struggle to its feet and carry on.

The truncated fall season was characterized by the customary economic problems of survival for the more than 50 plays in production, by continuing efforts to broaden the base of the theatergoing public, by the struggle of Mexican playwrights to see their works produced in sharp competition with a steady flow of imports from New York, London, and other theatrical capitals, and by the growing stature of the "New Mexican Playwrights," one of whom saw a brace of his works in impressive production during the season.

The economic crisis, before and after the quake, took its toll on the theater, thinning out audiences and reducing revenues. With high unemployment and inflation, the average Mexican found that his buying power had been eroded about 30 percent during the 1982-1985 period. Theater was a luxury he was decreasingly able to afford.

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To make theater more accessible to students, workers, and the less affluent, some theaters offer "two-for-one" tickets; others give free admission to certain groups at certain performances. In an attempt to extend their run, some plays are scheduled for only three or four nights a week. Theater companies also tour the provinces to tap new audiences, some of whom may one day be found "out-front" in Mexico City due to the constant migration from the countryside to the capital city.

Most Mexican impresarios consider theater a business and not an art. They tend to stage known quantities, such as hits from the United States or Europe —*Auntie Mame, The Odd Couple,* and *The Madwoman of Chaillot,* all of which were on Mexican stages this fall. They are less sure of the box-office appeal of new works by aspiring Mexican dramatists. This "box office mentality," shared by some Mexican directors, is regularly scored by Mexican playwrights, who regard theater as less a business than a means of giving artistic expression to concerns about continuing problems at the local and national levels.

Still, a healthy cross-section of Mexican playgoers seem to prefer foreign to Mexican plays. They go to the theater for entertainment rather than exposure to social and political problems.

As a result, Mexican playwrights must often have their works produced outside the commercial network—in workshops, clubs, union halls, universities, or in theaters subsidized by such government organizations as the "Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes" (INBA), the "Instituto Mexicano de Seguro Social" (IMSS), and the "Secretaría de Educación Publica" (SEP).

Within the past three years, however, prospects have improved for Mexican playwrights. According to critic Olga Harmony:

> There are more new plays by Mexican authors being produced here now than ever before. This is due to the fact that the rights to foreign plays must be paid in foreign currencies. And they are extremely expensive.

Clearly, the most promising development in Mexican theater over the past three years has been the emergence of the "New Mexican Playwrights." As many as 37 dramatists have been identified as belonging to this movement, headed by Victor Hugo Rascon, Sabina Berman, Felipe Santander, Jesus Gonzalez Davila, and Oscar Villegas. Theirs is a "theater of commitment," a theater at the service of socio-economic change. Most have learned their craft in workshops directed by such older, established playwrights as Emilio Carballido, Hugo Argüelles, and Vicinte Leñero.

The "New Playwrights" show a preference for farce, melodrama, the docudrama, or a hybrid genre. They write in a realistic or poetic-realistic vein, employing colloquial dialogue. They eschew the "well-made play" and the local color piece. Their themes range from the failure of the Mexican Revolution (1911-1917) to attain several of its goals, the futility of strikes, the exploitation of miners and peasants and political bossism in the rural sector, to the social consequences of extreme urban poverty.

For inspiration and cultural solidarity, these playwrights look to their fellow Latins to the South. With Colombia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and other Latin countries, they share a common ethnic background, similar social and political problems, and the continuing effects of cultural and economic imperialism.

Felipe Santander, a leading "New Playwright," saw his melodrama *El Extensionista (The County Agricultural Agent)* top the 2,000 mark in performances last fall. Following its 1978 debut, the play was performed widely throughout the country before labor and farmer groups, in clubs, schools, and university centers. In 1984 it settled down for a long run in a small Mexico City theater.

In this social protest work, Santander employs "agitprop," expressionist, and Brechtian effects to dramatize the plight of a group of peasants who are victimized by the local political chieftain and government officials—hardly a novel theme in Mexican literature. A Narrator-Balladeer introduces the play by telling the audience what is to come. Even before the action begins, he draws back the curtain to reveal a dramatic scene in progress. Stopping the action, he advises:

> Watch for this
> scene. . . . You'll see it
> later . . . and you will be asked
> to judge what's to be done.

As the action gets underway, Cruz, an idealistic, newly minted agronomist from Mexico City, comes walking into a desolate rural community to which he has been assigned. He is greeted warily by the peasants, who later tell him of their many lean years, their dependence on the local political chieftain "El Maximo," and their anger at not receiving title to "their lands." Cruz, with youthful enthusiasm, comes up with a number of textbook solutions to their problems; all are rejected as impractical. In time he realizes he will need the cooperation of "El Maximo" and a local government official to carry out his ambitious plan to shift the peasants' crop from corn to cotton. Reluctantly, the peasants agree to go along. "El Maximo," with a single sentence—"I support the agronomist's plan"—convinces the local banker to lend his support. Yet, the distrustful peasants continue to plant corn; only later, when they become convinced of Cruz's expertise, do they switch to cotton. By this time they desperately need sizable loans, which they secure at exorbitant interest rates. Finally the peasants rebel against their exploitation, but the local militia move in to quell the disturbance, arresting two "agitators": Cruz and an old peasant leader.

Later comes word that the two have been killed while in custody. The peasants, pitchforks in hand, resolve to march on the local constabulary. At this point, the Narrator-Balladeer, who throughout the play has offered commentaries on the action, moves to center stage.

> It's up to you to finish the
> work. . . . We'll listen to your
> opinions. What should be
> done?

With the actors looking out expectantly, members of the small audience vie with one another to offer their opinions:

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—A guerrilla movement . . . the only way . . .
—Not practical . . . with a strong neighbor to the North, it would not work.
—Educate the peasants . . . most are illiterate . . . When I finish college, I'll go and teach them . . . work with them.
—We need to get better organized at all levels . . . so that things like what we've just seen can't continue.

After thanking the audience for their participation, the Narrator-Balladeer underscores the need to expose corruption in all sectors of national life. And he exhorts his audience to get on the phone and urge their friends to come to see "El Extensionista."

We depend on the box office . . . the Government is not going to subsidize this play.

In Y, *el Milagro (And, the Miracle)*, his second play, which had its premiere in Mexico City last fall, Felipe Santander comes to grips with two major, interrelated problems in today's Latin America: the guerrilla movement and Liberation Theology. In this social-realist drama with Marxist overtones, action takes place in a small Latin American town, probably in El Salvador. Employing a split-level stage to accommodate his short graphic scenes, Santander unfolds the story of a guerrilla leader, Genaro Rojas, who, after being wounded in a skirmish with government troops, takes refuge in the Church of Santa Catarina. There, Padre Armando Mena operates under primitive conditions on the guerrilla leader, saving his life. Later, to protect Genaro from General Maurilio Garcia, Commandant of the Ninth Military Zone, Padre Armando changes the rebel leader's appearance, cutting his hair and outfitting him with a cassock and a new identity as his nephew, Padre Antonio, a recent graduate of a nearby seminary.

When Padre Armando learns of the atrocities committed by the General's "Death Squad," he suffers a heart attack and has to be hospitalized. Replacing him as parish priest is Padre Antonio, and the rebel leader-turned priest soon begins to say Mass, administer the Sacraments, and, with his fiery sermons, alienate the "good people" of the parish, including General Garcia, the ladies of the "Association of Perpetual Help," and local business and civic leaders.

Padre Antonio proves successful in winning back to the Church a number of peasants and workers, who had found no guidance or solace in the bland sermons of Padre Armando. With workers and peasants as his volunteer force, Padre Antonio completes long-delayed repairs on the church, adds a recreation center, and, in the process, develops a close rapport with the lower-class members of the parish. He urges peasants to take possession of choice, untilled fields, and he encourages workers to establish a training center so that, when they later take over the local plant, they will be skilled in administration and marketing, thus ensuring a successful operation of the future collectivized property.

Upon his return from the hospital, Padre Armando finds a parish revitalized by the socio-economic activism of Padre Antonio. He also learns of the disaffection of the "good people," who recount bitterly what has happened during his absence. A confrontation between the two Padres serves to underscore the sharp distinction between the Traditional Church and the Popular Church, today's adherents of Liberation Theology.

Padre Armando: I'll show you the danger of mixing religion and politics. . . . By using my parish for your political agitation you have incurred the serious disapproval of the civic leaders, the authorities, and the Church itself.
Padre Antonio: In your church there has been no political speech . . . nor will you find a book by Marx or Lenin. . . . The peasants Communists? No . . . only hungry men whose lands have been taken away. They don't know what Communism is. . . . I am with them. Christ would be, too. Isn't it the Church's obligation to watch out for the welfare of the faithful?

When General Garcia learns the true identity of Padre Antonio, he dispatches his henchmen to the church, where they gun down the rebel leader. With him fall six of his followers, together with a number of parishioners awaiting the next mass. In a type of peoples' court-martial, General Garcia later defends his action:

I gave orders to arrest them, not to kill them all. . . . That massacre transformed a local movement into the raging national upheaval that it has now become. . . . This is my version of events. . . . I accept the consequences.

Padre Armando, as presiding officer of the court-martial, declares the General personally responsible for the massacre and condemns him to death. He draws a pistol and calmly executes the General. The "miracle" of the title is now clear: from a Traditional Churchman, Padre Armando, through his experience with the rebel leader, has turned into a Popular Churchman on the side of the poor and oppressed in their class struggle.

For Mexicans, Y, *el Milagro* is a highly polemical, even scandalous play. The sight of a rebel leader, with no religious training, officiating on the altar, and that of a priest executing a man in cold blood, caused many Conservatives to leave the theater unconvinced of the rightness of the Liberation Theology cause.

Liberal Mexicans, for their part, recall that the Mexican Revolution was fought in part to remove the Church from its once-lofty position in the socio-economic-political realm in Mexico. Hence they cannot be expected to welcome a restoration of the Church's activist role in the secular field.

As evidenced by these two seminal works, *El Extensionista* and Y, *el Milagro*, Mexico's "New Playwrights" are today forging a new rational theater. Whether regarded as a symptom or a cure of contemporary problems, this theater cannot fail to provoke the national conscience.

Francis Donahue is an international drama critic and teaches at California State University, Long Beach.

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Letter From the Southwest

by Odie Faulk

Closing the Campus Frontier

The recent drop in the price of oil has been welcome indeed to most Americans, for it portends a boost of epic proportions for the economy. However, the blessings of cheap petroleum do not fall evenly across the land. In Texas and Oklahoma, as in other oil-producing states, the drop from $40 to $15 a barrel has brought a budget crunch greater than anything experienced during the so-called "Great Depression."

Both these states have taxes on oil and gas which are based on the selling price of petroleum. Lower prices thus mean lower tax collections. In Oklahoma, for example, every drop of one dollar in the price of a barrel of oil means a direct loss of $11 million in tax revenues, and there is a ripple effect in the economy which brings the tax shortfall to about $40 million for each drop of one dollar in the price of a barrel of oil. For fiscal year 1987 Oklahoma will have almost $500 million less to spend than it had last year despite huge tax increases in 1984 and 1985. This means a budget cut in FY 1987 of 17 percent from the budget of FY 1986; the largest cut in any year in the 1930's was only 10 percent. To the south, Texas is looking at a decrease of $1.5 billion in state revenue.

Legislators therefore are scrambling for places they can make drastic cuts —naturally, this means cuts that will not reduce the income of the "good old boy" network. Inasmuch as more than 50 percent of the budget in both Texas and Oklahoma is spent on education, public and higher, there is the temptation to make cuts in this area. To do so, however, would be extremely shortsighted.

In the two centuries since the birth of the republic, numerous observers have offered theories about why democracy has thrived here. Writing under the name J. Hector St. John, Michel de Crevecoeur observed in 1782 in *Letters from an American Farmer* that the newly arrived immigrant to American shores pushed out to the edge of the limits of settlement; there he was forced to shed his European modes of thought and adopt those of the New World; there he dropped his old prejudices and attitudes to form new ones. In short, it was the *frontier* which transformed him from a Frenchman or German or Englishman into an American.

One hundred and eleven years later, Frederick Jackson Turner, a historian, focused his attention on the same question—and arrived at the same answer as Crevecoeur: the *frontier* was responsible for promoting democracy and Americanism. In 1893 the young Professor Turner gave an address before the American Historical Association, entitled "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." He asserted that the frontier was *the* decisive factor in welding together an American nation and nationality distinct from other nations and nationalities, as well as in producing distinctly American traits.

The frontier, to Turner, was a state of mind as well as the area of sparse settlement where "savagery met civilization." It was the area where the dominant traits were individualism, freedom, inquisitiveness, ingeniousness, materialism, strength, a laxness of business morals—and democracy. The frontier was a "safety valve of abundant resources open to him who would take," meaning that the natural resources of the nation should be placed in the hands of those who would make productive use of these resources.

Thus the frontier produced an American nationalism that favored lenient land legislation, internal improvements at government expense, and a protective tariff. Yet, paradoxically, it also meant a hearty dislike for authority, a belief in individual initiative, and the free-enterprise concept.

This new man, this American frontiersman, gained a reputation for getting things done. He excelled in the production of tangibles, and thus he had little time for philosophizing. He was not known for introspection but for work! All the words used to describe a frontiersman—independence, courage, self-reliance, initiative, individualism, industry—implied work. On the frontier the man who painted a picture or composed a symphonic piece had no one to view or listen to the result, but if he cultivated his fields he had food on the table year-round.

This attitude about practicality and work was reflected in the folk heroes of the frontier. In Europe folk tales were concerned with princes and princesses, with vacant kingdoms and fairy godmothers. The central figures of American folk tales were Paul Bunyan, who could cut more timber than other men; Pecos Bill, the cowboy; Kemp Morgan, the oil-field driller. Our heroes were *workers*!

Even our universities and colleges developed along different lines from those in Europe. Ours trained graduates to work at specific tasks—as accountants, engineers, scientists—while European universities graduated people who (supposedly) could appreciate the arts. Only after graduation was the European told to look for some practical application for his education.

Yet according to the census of 1890, a fact which Frederick Jackson Turner noted, the free land in the West—the frontier—largely was gone. No longer could young men and women seeking a new start or older people looking for somewhere to start over again find free or even inexpensive land in the West. If it was a frontier of free or inexpensive land which had kept democracy alive during the first century and more of the republic, how then was democracy to be kept alive in the years ahead?

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During the 20th century it was the widespread availability of education—especially higher education—which prevented class lines from becoming rigid. The average poor youth desirous of advancing his economic and social station in life found that a university degree opened doors of opportunity. Anyone wishing to become an officer in the Armed Forces needed a bachelor's degree; anyone wanting to work at the white-collar level found such employment easier to get through a university placement service; certainly those wanting to enter the professions needed to go to college; and anyone wanting to enter the civil service above GS 7 (other than through political appointment) found that a college diploma made civil service exams easier.

Thus today it is ironic that Texas and Oklahoma—two states where, supposedly, there is a belief in the work ethic of the frontier and a hatred for rigid class lines, where, supposedly, there is a dislike for privilege based on inherited wealth—should be talking of raising tuition as a way of cutting government expenditures. The combined cost of tuition, textbooks, laboratory fees, and room and board have already increased to the point where it is virtually impossible for the sons and daughters of the poor to work their way through college.

To this, legislators reply that every raise in tuition and dormitory fees has been offset by the awarding of additional scholarships and loans to the needy. This does not enable students to feel they have *earned* their education, but rather that they are the recipients of state welfare. Moreover, this growing reliance on Federal and state loans and scholarships means that state and Federal bureaucrats increasingly are determining who will be the next technological elite.

Democracy and free enterprise, which have produced an abundance envied around the world, demand that higher education be available to all willing to work for it, not just for those born to wealth and privilege or else able to curry the favor of the bureaucracy. This fact somehow seems to have escaped legislators in Texas and Oklahoma, states founded by men and women who believed in the work ethic and in individual choice, not in bureaucratic paternalism or inherited privilege. Such is the road to making America a land of rigid class structure, not an oasis of democracy and free enterprise.

Odie Faulk is a distinguished Southern historian and a contributing editor to Chronicles.

Letter From the Caribbean

by Geoffrey Wagner

A Cultural Evening in Grenada

During the four-and-one-half years of Cuban hegemony in Grenada, I often had cause to cross a country road from my house on the Pointe Salines peninsula to the Headquarters of the DGI (Directorio General de Intelegencia) to complain about the noise. Would they please turn down the *altavoz* or speaker system beaming Castro's speeches at the empty West Indian countryside? The furious squawks of the Cuban dictator, aimlessly amplified into the velvety dark, seemed an apt symbol of communism's folly and failure, for even the Cuban workers didn't listen, being so hard-worked they bunked down early; but it was interfering with our Mozart. Besides, the medical students who rented rooms nearby couldn't study against such sound. I led a delegation of them to the DGI house.

We were met with cautious courtesy and made our pitch. For a moment I couldn't help comparing the clean-shaven, short-haired Cuban intelligence men with the hirsute hoboes I had seen leading student demonstrations in the 1960's in America. Señor dell'Osa told us that his Cubans (to each group of whom an agent was attached) were enjoying a cultural evening, *una noche cultural*. If so, I reflected, they were doing it to snores, to be heard coming from the barracks huts about. In the event, it seemed neither advisable nor possible to arrest His Master's Voice, and we departed, the students disconsolate, myself the richer for a new translation.

For the term *cultural* seems to be communist code for yet another Orwellian opposite, meaning anti-cultural, since propaganda can never be art. It can supply art with a pabulum of sorts, as in the best of Eisenstein, but that director's pathetic last years under Zhdanov's cultural commissarship could be calculated to turn even a Candide into an "agent of the opposition." Thus in Grenada, an island without art, *una noche cultural* had to make do. Still and all, I confess to surprise at the crudity of the Cubans in this respect. After all, Cuba pretends to some cultural sophistication. Castro's friends include Gabriel García Marquez, the man who dismissed the agonized Vietnamese boat people as so many "currency smugglers" before receiving his Nobel Prize for literature; Cuba also boasts some good guitar music, some rotten painting, and worse ballet under the aegis of the ageless Alicia Alonso, another intimate of Castro's, called "The Menopauseless Giselle" by Juan Blanc. Perhaps what Cuba sent us Grenadians down in the way of culture indicated their estimate of our intelligence.

Looking back on his life in Trinidad, V.S. Naipaul reflects: "Nothing bound us together except this common residence. There was no nationalist feeling; there could be none. There was no profound anti-imperialist feeling." There was none in Grenada until Maurice Bishop tried to manufacture it after his "coop de tat" of 1979. We in the Windwards are much too porous for the usual Marxist ideological disinformation to have any meaning at all. "Nothing was created in the West Indies," writes V.S. Naipaul. If culture is identity, we lack it, and thank God. It is conceivable that the internal diversity of a typical Windward Island (including Indians, Chinese, Syrians) saved the sanity of Grenada during the years of the New Jewel regime, as Bishop thundered away: "In the context of the cultural revolution, I want to emphasize three main points—the spreading of the socialist ideology, the wiping out of illiteracy and the building of a new patriotic and revolutionary-democratic intelligentsia." To follow the book, he had to come up with some sort of local cultural palingenesis. Frankly, he couldn't get close. He even gave up on the rallies when only 10 children turned up for one.

Grenada has no folk art, like Haiti. It has no theater and one cinema

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(nonstop kung fu). This is part of the pleasure of such places. Having lived at close quarters with New York intellectuals, I personally treasure their absence as one of the delights of life in the islands. Somehow we have to get by without Andy Warhol, Norman Mailer, Duran Duran, the Harvey Milk homosexual High School, and journals devoted to black lesbians. After the murder of Bishop, his Ministers, and pregnant mistress, a shoot-on-sight curfew was established during which our single radio station played almost nothing but reggae. Surely that is indigenous?

It is to Jamaica. Reggae—a contraction of ragged and everyday—was launched as a national anthem of Rastafarianism when Haile Selassie I was crowned on November 30th, 1930, Ras Tafari, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Marcus Garvey's second Christ and first black Messiah (St. Augustine was of course a black). Reggae came out of Ska and, before that, Mento (homemade drums, reeds, so forth). Despite its political braggadocio and commercial success in the hands of publicity seekers like Ansel Collins and Bob Marley (who died of lung cancer brought on by chain-smoking reefers), reggae cannot be called music.

It is a sort of audible itch, one that makes it impossible for anyone in the vicinity to get any sleep. With its steady sequence of Messiahs, each presuming to be Moses and/or John the Baptist (Marcus Garvey, Leonard Howell, Claudius Henry, two of whom were convicted of fraud), Rastafarianism would scarcely exist had it not received such starry-eyed academic attention and respect. This is particularly the case in Britain now, where Rastafarianism is institutionalized, seriously taught in schools, one Bajan teacher there, Maureen Stone, calling it "the only really indigenous religion, faith and sect in the Caribbean." I wonder. The other day I gave a Rastaman a ride in Grenada. He was the real McCoy or, should I say, Dreadlock, red of eye and reeking of ganja. I asked him what he thought of the brutal treatment of Haile Selassie's now-elderly daughters, penned in a small room outside Addis Ababa without toilet facilities, one dying of cancer.

"Who dat?"

He had not the slightest idea who Haile Selassie was, the progenitor of his creed, God Himself in human form (though also said to be descended from Solomon and Sheba). My rider should have been pining to repair to the paradise of Ethiopia, for, according to the creed (as published by the University of the West Indies), "Jamaica is literally Hell for the black man, just as Ethiopia is literally heaven."

Maurice Bishop's flirtation with our Rastas was most instructive. At the start he wooed them. In the days following his 1979 coup they were all over St. George's, directing traffic and openly smoking pot. But they deserted him as he became establishment, refusing to join his rag-tag-and-bobtail army. Eventually, Jewel turned into Babylon and Rastas started knocking off Bishop's soldiers in the north. At this point he rounded up 300 of them and set them to work under the gun on Hope Vale estate. It is clear they would have ended up like the Miskito Indians in Nicaragua. Indeed, Jamaican Rastas taken to Cuba for terrorist training were required to shear off their locks first.

Still, the half-Ghanian, half-Scottish ex-policeman, and now British MP, Paul Boateng, has lauded Rastafarianism on the BBC as a faith filled with peace, love, and the rest. GLC (Greater London Council) schools teach Jamaican Rasta as a language, with ludicrous results. There have been cases of West Indian parents in Britain sending their children back to school in the islands, in order to obtain more disciplined instruction. Most Grenadians make strict and pious parents. To dredge the gutters for drug addicts and thieves and hold the result up as something called Black Culture is the height of condescension. We do not adulate the lowest elements of our northern cities as White Culture.

If, in America, Rastafarianism continues to *épater* ambitious assistant professors, in politics it takes us into the jungle, to the racial insanity of Hitler. God is black and chose the black race. For their presumption to the contrary, the Jews have been well punished. The Pope is head of the Ku Klux Klan. *Una noche cultural* of this sort of thing must be enough to send anyone round the bend, without benefit of "de weed." Blackness becomes an instrument for mental suicide, a caricature of a delirium, a brew into which anything may be stirred. As the late Shiva Naipaul put it, "There is no church; there are no scriptures; there is no ordained leadership. Each Rastafarian has his own version of the thing. You become a Rastaman by declaring yourself to be such."

But to be so permanently impermanent is scarcely to exist. Marcus Garvey no longer does so, yet is constantly recreated by the likes of Boateng. All Garvey's absurd disasters with his Black Star Line for repatriating Jamaicans to Africa, his fantasies of a Negro Empire, were forgotten in 1965 when his remains were reverently disinterred and returned from England to Jamaica. To many he remains a holy hero. So does Maurice Bishop. He tried to get Grenadian schools to adopt a curriculum of reggae, African basket-weaving, *Reader's Digest* anthropology, and hair-braiding, basing our culture on the new version of the three R's—Reggae, Rasta, and Revolution. This is what every parent in the real world of the islands hopes will *not* be taught their children.

What, finally, of calypso? It is Trinidadian, as narcissistic reggae is Jamaican, though the most famous calypsonian of all, Mighty Sparrow (Slinger Francisco), was born in Grenada, as was "Boogsie" Sharp, the world's number one steel pannist. V.S. Naipaul tells us that "the calypso is a purely local form."

Maybe so, but its monody still cannot be called music. Most calypsos sound the same. However, they are verbal and partake of topical social satire, none of which seems to last very long. The University of the West Indies' ongoing "Calypso Research Project" has never, so far as I know, answered the charge of ephemerality in the form, being chiefly concerned with internal debates such as whether East Indians influenced calypso (a loud No!) or whether the lyrics are prejudicial to women (a loud Yes!).

When he seized power, Bishop asked Sparrow, who like Antigua's King Short-Shirt can be counted on to be routinely revolutionary, for a calypso, and got one—*Gairy, Dead or Alive*, virtually a plea for extradition of

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the previous Prime Minister from America. It was played a lot over our radio station, but where is it now? I have never succeeded in acquiring a plate or tape of it anywhere. In a few years' time, Trinidadians will be asking who Gairy was. Great satire is universal.

Then, Sparrow being too notoriously extra-insular, Bishop organized an indigenous pro-Jewel calypso from our own Flying Turkey, a PRA (People's Revolutionary Army) officer. Turkey's calypso provided a sense of immediacy:

> People want to hear you come
> out in defense of the
> Revolution, people want to
> hear you come out and rage
> hostility upon Reagan and
> American interventionist
> attitudes. . . . "The Lion"
> from Carriacou, he came out
> and he blaze imperialism.

So Turkey concluded his lyrics with the refrain:

> Let them come, let them
> come,
> We will bury them in the sea.

Schoolchildren in Grenada were made to chant this. (It even got airtime over WBAI-FM in America.) But when "they" came, and were not buried in the sea by the PRA, another Grenadian produced a calypso incorporating these lines, mocking them and blessing America. Yet another which went the rounds after intervention was called (for some reason) *Guadalajara*; it derided Cubans who claimed to have to come to Grenada merely to kill cockroaches. When President Reagan spoke at our Queen's Park on February 20th, 1986, to a rapturously applauding crowd of nearly half the island, he was greeted by a calypso from Scaramouche which mimicked the rat-rat-rat of firing and the "music" of the intervention. *Time* called it "the country's most popular ballad." I'm afraid not. I doubt if many remembered it or if you could buy any of these songs anywhere today. Art is not as fugitive as this.

BeeWee culture is social rather than aesthetic. Jewel's call for Negritude, Africanity, whatever, passed us by. But the Naipauls are correct. There is a void in the islands. For recluses like myself, fleeing what Matthew Arnold's scholar gypsy called "this strange disease of modern life / With its sick hurry, its divided aims," this is a very great plus. But to lack a strong graphic culture, as inherited by, say, China or Mexico, is to be extremely vulnerable to television as a replacement for thought. The first dishes are dotting the islands. The first television program I saw in Grenada (apart from video cassettes) was an American newscast. Its principal subjects were the proliferation of AIDS, excessive fat in chickens, and a black riot in South Africa which the locals sitting along the bar beside me assumed to be taking place in the United States. Kicking and screaming, we are finally being dragged into the global village.

A CCNY Emeritus Professor of English, Geoffrey Wagner has a retirement home in Grenada from which he watched events on that island at close hand.

Letter From the Heartland

by Jane Greer

Will They Still Love Us Tomorrow?

L. and M. and their two blond preschool sons have escaped, after years of stealthy planning and saving and months of waiting.

Not the gaunt East European urchins we expect, they step off the plane as if from the pages of *Family Circle*, self-conscious in our applause, the little boys in Velcro sneakers, M. movie-star pretty, L. grinning, gregarious, protective, dazzled. They wear their best for us; everything else is stowed in one large suitcase, less than I'd take myself for a weekend in Minneapolis.

Traveling light, they leave behind a wrenching trail of jetsam: family, friends, everyday familiarity. But they are free and safe at last.

Through an interpreter (in this case, my husband's mother, who never told me she was fluent in her parents' language), L. and M. try to express their wonder at everything that has been done for them, given to them. A small basket of apples? *Ah, they are rare and expensive back home.* Would the boys like coloring books and crayons? *Please, the boys are fine, they have plenty.* (But where is it all?) A loaned sewing machine so that M. can alter the clothes that have been given to the family? Shy M. can only beam and nod.

Two days after their arrival, we sit in their hot, crowded living room on folding chairs. Jet-lagged and culture-shocked, M. hovers, flits, brews coffee, sets out saltines in a ceramic candy dish—all we have stocked her cupboards with that might be remotely suitable for American guests. Another visitor, Y., a refugee who came here two years ago and acts as their appointed translator, says, "In Communist countries, people have wrong idea about United States. All we hear is California"—he pauses and looks at us meaningfully; we catch his drift —"New York, Detroit. They don't tell us that here is such a nice life, so many kind people." (In spite of our bad press abroad, we are still the best there is; they are dying to come here.) Yes, all three of them are absolutely floored by American kindness, says Y. L., who has understood a little of Y.'s speech in English, nods his assent, looks around at his odds-and-ends furniture from our basements and attics, at his small sons whom we have clothed in "Masters of the Universe" sweatsuits from K-Mart, at us, his refuge, new masters of *his* universe.

A man to my left—local son of Old World parents who, with his equally bilingual wife, came to welcome the newcomers and act as translator (there are now more translators in the room than people to need them)—notes how charming it is to hear little children speaking the old language, something only grandparents do in private here and now. My mother-in-law jokes to L. that she and my husband's father never taught the language to their children because they wanted to use it to keep secrets from the kids. L. smiles, only a little pensively, and says that now he and his wife will be able to do the same thing with their boys.

I can't help myself—it must be done, like tonguing a raw loose tooth —and I have someone ask L. what it was like in his country, how he managed to get out. He's energetic in his description, sits on the edge of his

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chair, glad to tell us everything in an avalanche of soft foreign sounds; the roomful of translators hasn't a prayer. Open complaint is 90-proof luxury for tired L., and he savors it. I know what he's saying *without* a translator: the stories are always the same, with never an interesting twist. I feel silly for asking—how naive he must think me!—but he's safe now, surrounded by new friends, warm and eager to give *us* something, to let us know how wonderful we are, and he can't be stopped. Perhaps every successful escape is, after all, as unique as a first love, and makes its narrator proud and shivery with remembrance.

Does it seem long ago and far away to L., now that he has seen a supermarket and two days of American television? I listen to the snow-soft cataract of words, watch M. watching him and nodding, and am moved to uneasy, throat-constricting tenderness. L. and M. are smitten, wrapped in our lavish American generosity, wildly in love with us all. What will happen when they learn that we're not as ignorant as we seem, that our failure to help them in their homeland—and to protect our own—is intentional? They are a mountain-sized boulder in the path of our disbelief in the *inherent badness* of Communism (which we treat like a kinky, harmless religion); what will happen when they learn that our will to disbelieve is strong enough to let us walk around them?

If we are lucky, they will love us still. Like Tinkerbell, who dies if no one is left who believes in fairies, we will become corrupt and paralyzed once the world believes we are. Oh, L. may grow tired, after a while, of telling his story to people who have had ineffable freedom from birth and are still unshocked, unworried, unmoved to action by the evidence of his life (he came here to save his children; what will he see us doing for ours?). Or, worse, he may grow bitter when he learns English well enough to understand our nightly newscasters' bland implications that he risked his family's torture, imprisonment, and death to run from an evil that doesn't exist, from civilized gentlemen who just want to be *friends*.

But if Americans are *kind*, the multitude who risk it all to come here (where they've heard we're bullish on human worth) are the world's most *patient* souls. Adversity can have that effect. I think I'm compelled to question every refugee and émigré I meet because their predictable willingness, the innocent hope in their tales of horror, comfort me: the tortured people in the world still believe in us, no matter how ill-founded that belief. Perhaps we can still deserve it. I'll stop my questions the first time a refugee from Communism hisses at my query and snaps, "Why should I tell you what it's like? Are you deaf and blind? Can't you read? Our suffering is not for your entertainment. You will do nothing to help us, ever, or to save yourselves, and you are as dead as we."

Because on that day, when the last believers have fallen away, the words he speaks will be true.

Jane Greer edits and publishes Plains Poetry Journal.

Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

The Federal Government and Federal Express

Why do agencies of the U.S. government make such heavy use of Federal Express?

No, that's not a riddle. It's a serious question. I have been dealing with a number of Federal bureaucrats—never mind why—and it seems that almost invariably they communicate by Federal Express. Next day service, too, not the cheaper 48-hour rate.

Has anyone else noticed this? Hands up—yes, I thought so.

I think I have it figured out, and it's not just that the U.S. Postal Service, like Savings Bonds, is for the rubes, who don't know any better. It all comes back to the strategic failure of the Reagan Administration.

Ronald Reagan has surprised me twice, so far. If anyone had told me while I watched him give The Speech for Barry Goldwater back in '64 that he would someday be President, I'd have sneered. But I'd have been wrong. If anyone had told me, back in 1980, that after six years of his Presidency, there'd have been nothing much in the way of structural change in our bloated, officious, smothering government, I'd have sneered again. And been wrong again.

Let's face it: the Reagan Administration may be a public relations success, but it has been a substantive flop.

I should have seen the signs right after the election of 1980. I was dealing with one of the many Federal agencies that gives away money to the undeserving and/or well-to-do (like me: go ahead, say it). An acquaintance on the staff confided to me that he and his co-workers were *very worried*. "They're talking about cutting our budget in half," he told me. "They say we may have to take a 10 percent cut in staff." (We were on the telephone, so he couldn't see my expression.)

Fifty percent budget cut = 10 percent staff reduction. There you have in a nutshell the argument for abolishing programs rather than simply cutting them back. There was one brief shining moment in the winter of 1980-81 when inside-the-beltway types feared the worst from this Hollywood madman. *Nothing* he could have done would have surprised them. They saw him as a berserk right-wing loonie who had unaccountably been elected in a landslide and who was certainly going to shake things up beyond recognition. And he blew it.

Now, the agency I've been dealing with lately is one of the least necessary of the hundreds of Federal bureaus, commissions, agencies. It doesn't do a great deal of harm only because it doesn't do a great deal of anything: certainly it's one of the ones most Reagan voters would miss least. If I'd thought about it at all back in 1981, I'd have assumed it was destined to disappear in the Great Shake-Up.

But of course that didn't happen. Instead, this agency is one of the many that the Reagan Administration has more or less hobbled, without inflicting any permanent or serious injury. At the top, Reaganites come and (if they're halfway competent) go. They put in their stretch in this bureaucratic Siberia, try to keep it from getting in the papers any more than necessary, spend the budget that Congress insists this enterprise deserves, and are eventually rewarded by better jobs in agencies that the Administration obviously cares more about. While they're in

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place, the permanent staff regard them with undisguised hostility, as interlopers who will be replaced after the next Democratic victory.

These people, administrators and staff, are the ones who keep sending me missives by Federal Express. At first I thought it was outrageous that this grotesquely expensive form of communication was used to transmit the trivial stuff that I was getting, but I have come to realize that *spending money is the point*. The political appointees at the top are happy to see the agency's money spent on mailing unimportant messages around the country: At least it does no harm. The permanent staff people are content to hunker down and wait out the Reaganites, but, in classic bureaucratic fashion, they want to spend everything allotted to them so that no one will propose to cut their budget for next year.

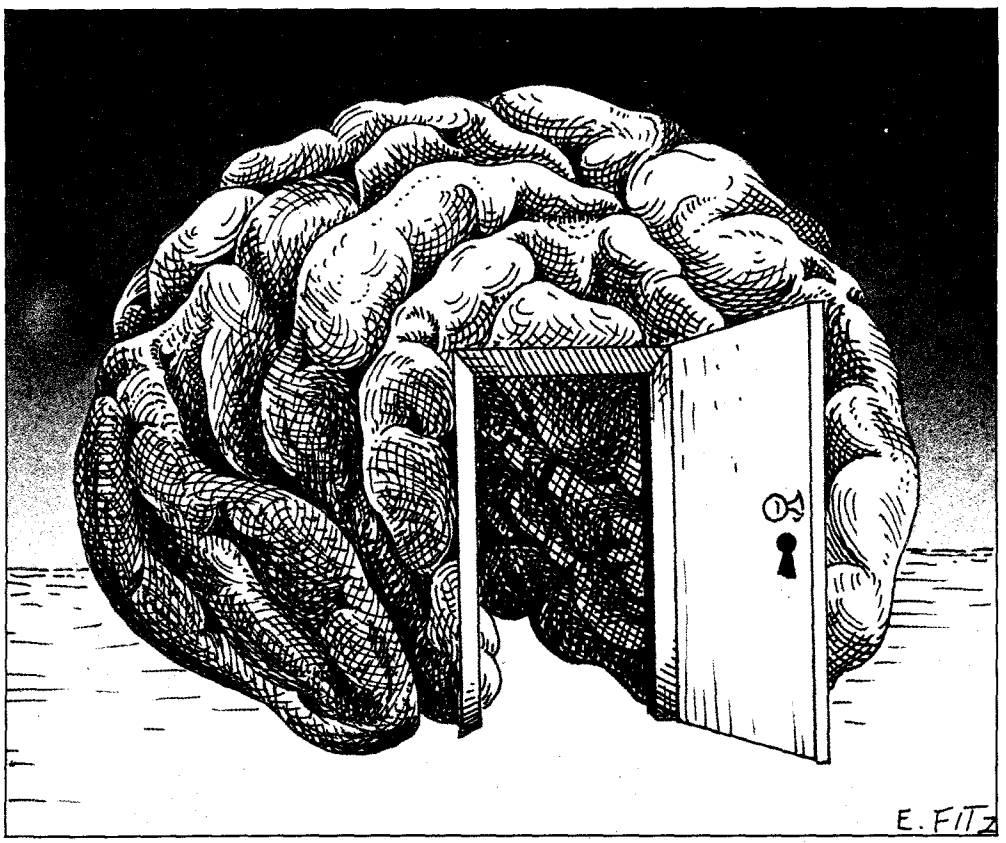
Does anyone have a better explanation? It's a hypothesis anyway, and if I'm right, there's a nice play in Federal Express stock for anyone who can predict the outcome of the 1988 election. Remember: you read it here first.

John Shelton Reed recently threw away the form from Who's Who in Finance and Industry.

TYPEFACES

Temporizing on the Thames

by Andrei Navrozov



It is one of the chief distinguishing features of the philistine that he thinks himself, above all things, "open-minded." While the converse of this proposition is untrue, modern culture having witnessed an explosion in the doctrinaire varieties of philistinism, it is nevertheless a fact that the true-blue, classic philistine, of the kind described by the Russian word *obyvatel'*, who has passed, without mutation, from the world of Chekhov's short stories into real life on the front pages of the *New York Times*, has "an open mind." It is his open-mindedness that allows the philistine to mention, with a disarming sincerity, that his club is open to "anyone" ("except, you know, those pushy types"). He cannot be confused with the bigot, whose mind is closed, because the philistine never hears himself; put another way, the bigot is an intellectually superior being, harmless in the overall scheme of cultural existence, because, unlike the philistine, he has the capacity for self-examination. The bigot may be seen as an introspective loner, whose gloomy, rude, or cynical outlook sets him apart from his philistine contemporaries. By contrast, the agenda for the philistine's friendly, chatty open-mindedness is set by the fellow mem-

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CONCERT IN THE PARK

by Andrei Navrozov

Like most, that sound was infused
With darkness as with tea leaves,
Absorbed, like some amazing news,
By the still night's Darjeeling.

It crumbled like a sugar cube,
Dissolving, sweetly tentative,
In the warm summer that imbued
The cupped yet rimless entity.

I mean the night. So keen its eye,
Its ear such tones of azure,
That both the sound and the sight
Seemed one and numb with pleasure.

As midnight broke its own spell
The dark went on infusing
With stillness that unearthly shell,
With melting pearl, that music.

---

bers of his club, that is to say, by his milieu.

As in all social and cultural matters, in the domain of literature (our present concern) the open-minded likes and dislikes of the philistine's milieu are forever in flux, undergoing perpetual revision and transformation in reaction to the changing habits of society as a whole and in response to those scattered individuals whose achievement, often belatedly or posthumously, invariably asserts itself as the one and only true criterion by which a creative epoch is measured. By the turn of the century, at least in Russia, no poem was thought to be truly elegant if the nightingale failed to put in an appearance somewhere in the third stanza; by the 1920's, it took the superhuman originality of divine Pasternak to restore the little creature to the poetic vocabulary (just about everyone else was writing about radium). In the United States today, the nightingale seems to have been replaced by phenomena which, for the sake of precision if not modesty, must be described as netheromphalic, and once again superhuman courage is needed to seek out the prose of an Anthony Powell or the verse of a Philip Larkin.

The philistine rides high in the pages of *London Reviews*. In his "Introduction to the London Review of Books," the lead piece in this collection anthologizing the paper's achievements of the last three years, editor Karl Miller sets the stage for the orgy of open-mindedness that is to follow:

> I remember a remark which came at this early point from Robert Silvers, editor of the *New York Review*, to the effect that he saw himself as giving people the chance to have their say.

This remark made a vivid impression on Mr. Miller, whose paper was set up with money from the *New York Review*, and he agreed with it. He, Karl Miller, would follow the example of his American friend Bob Silvers and give people the chance to have their say. There is, however, a danger in this sort of compassionate, liberal attitude: Not only will people take advantage of you, they will think you a Milquetoast besides. Mr. Miller senses that an intellectual, while being open-minded, must hold his own, and he hastens to qualify his position:

> Now that people seemed to be having trouble in reaching agreement, there might be a merit in publishing their debates. I need hardly add that the commitment to hospitality and diversity was a long way from boundless. I am talking about a fairly small matter of degree.

Indeed he is, although he does not hear himself. But let us listen to the "debates" themselves.

The political debates of *London Reviews* reflect without exception the trivial politics of the American left, parochialized *ad absurdum* (at least from the American vantage point) to fit the creaky cradle of democracy. The anthology opens with Peter Pulzer's essay on "The Oxford Vote"; that is, "the vote on 29 January by Congregation of Oxford University, by 738 votes to 319, not to award an Honorary Doctorate of Civil Law to the Prime Minister." The politician is bad; she takes bread from orphans and gives the rich hydrogen bombs which they can use against defenseless seals while factories are closing and Reagan plays Russian roulette with our children's future; Oxford University is good, because it voted, by a majority vote (unlike, one thinks, the British nation electing its Prime Minister), not to honor the bad politician. Oxford's courage is slight by American standards; here, Jeane Kirkpatrick is not even allowed to speak on campus, while the hecklers get to wear pretty armbands and spit on the university president's doorstep.

In the sphere of literary criticism,

Mr. Miller's debates are equally broad. Take deconstruction, for instance, a critical phenomenon to which his periodical seems rather devoted. Here is the opening sentence of "Derrida's Axioms," by E.D. Hirsch Jr., a review of Jonathan Culler's *On Deconstruction*: "Deconstruction . . . must be judged, simply by virtue of the commentary it has generated, an important cultural phenomenon." Had this sentence been antecedent to Mr. Hirsch's discussion of the Abominable Snowman, I daresay all would be well; but why should an intellectual judge something an important cultural phenomenon simply by the virtue of the commentary it has generated?

Deconstruction, from the very beginning but especially in its present "movement" form, is the great bold initiative on the part of American "Ivy League" literary academics to redistribute, and thereby expropriate and appropriate, the intellectual wealth of past generations by a kind of tweedy grave-robbing. Their motive is a thief's motive (property being, Proudhon's slogan notwithstanding, much less like theft than theft), and I have the distinct feeling Mr. Hirsch suspects this when he insists throughout his review that—Hello, Mr. Miller!—"intellectual culture thrives upon debate"; that is to say, that his detailed review of the thieves' rhetoric is undertaken by him purely in the interest of scholarship

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(one wonders how he would approach, for instance, Stalin's contribution to the study of linguistics), and is not to be taken for a fellow traveler's *Bon voyage!* In a word, he has an open mind. Perhaps not as open as his editor's: Mr. Miller opines in his "Introduction" that "it is probable that the monuments assailed by Deconstruction—the literary text, the literary tradition, authorship—will . . . survive. But that is not to say . . . that the exciting work of destruction will have been wholly in vain." Yet Mr. Hirsch possesses a mind open enough, it would seem, to get him into the pages of the *London Reviews*.

In the purely literary sphere, where the open mind reigns supreme, there are some exceptions here, most notably Ian Hamilton's "Diary" excerpt in which Doris Lessing, in her prize-winning role as Jane Sommers, is savaged, cooly and merrily. But Mr. Hamilton is hardly a member of Mr. Miller's club, having come into his own as he had in the pages of a genuinely pluralistic (read: bigoted) British press and only later catapulted into relative transatlantic stardom with his book on Lowell. He is rather an Honorary Member ("We've got to get this guy in. So what, I don't care if he is!"), whose achievements entitled him to club membership on his own terms. That freedom, however, the privilege of being part of a group from which he ordinarily would be excluded, may prove a gift that is easier to bestow than to bear. This is relevant because Mr. Hamilton is the editor of an anthology of his own.

The New Review Anthology, the cover blurb tells us, "is, quite simply, a selection of the best in contemporary writing, both fiction and non-fiction, and poetry." Advertisements like this, quite simply, bode ill for the product, and one is relieved to read the editor's calm, lucid, and unpretentious two-page preface in which not once does Mr. Hamilton allude to the openness of his mind. In fact, on reading the selections from *The New Review*, which Mr. Hamilton edited from its inception in 1974 to its passing in 1979, the reader is not disappointed. Or, at the very least, the reader does not scream with rage, as well he may after buying a copy of *London Reviews*.

Since *The New Review Anthology* contains no literary criticism as such (unless Robert Lowell's marvelous and important memoir of John Crowe Ransom is literary criticism), while *London Reviews* contains no fiction, their editors' relative sensitivity to prose cannot be compared. (Mr. Miller makes an appearance in Mr. Hamilton's collection in the guise of a writer, although the sheer stratospheric innocuousness of his little sketch is of no help in settling the issue, suggesting only that the editor "knows the score.") What both anthologies do contain is poetry.

The poetry section in *London Reviews* begins with Tony Harrison's "V.," a sinister blend of epi-Larkinian matter-of-factness with virulent American-style obscenity. Mr. Harrison's 1975 *Palladas: Poems* (Anvil) gave one hope, as old-timers used to say; to borrow a Pasternak metaphor, one could hear the anapest of Mr. Harrison's thought rummaging, like a mouse, in the bread-box of his writing. That sound is not heard in "V."; it is a soulless, concrete-and-corrugated-metal garage-like structure where passersby do not linger for fear of being raped. Other poems in the anthology are slightly better, but some are a good deal worse; consider Fiona Pitt-Kethley's "Sex Objects":

> I learned from a friend's porno
> mag that men can buy the
> better class of plastic doll (posh
> ones are hard and unyielding,
> not the pneumatic sort that fly
> from windows when they're
> pricked), in slow installments,
> torso first.

Is this poetry? Journalism? Autobiography? I just don't know. But I do know that the editor of *London Reviews* has an open mind.

Mr. Hamilton starts the poetry section of his anthology with Douglas Dunn's "The Tear." I need only quote one line of it, the very first line, set apart:

> Dawn comes remembering the
> dawn, and you.

Poetry? Yes. Original? Yes. Does Mr. Dunn "keep it up"? Read the remaining 27 lines, and you will find out. Is Mr. Dunn a Great Poet? That will be judged by history, but he is a poet most surely. Other contributors to the poetry section are Robert Lowell, D.M. Thomas, Andrew Motion, A. Alvarez, James Fenton, Seamus Heaney, and a few more "names," along with several less audible voices (John Fuller, Peter Potter) that clearly deserve being heard; only D.M. Thomas' "Lorca" may be said to approach Fiona Pitt-Kethley in awfulness, a screaming black stain on the surface of Mr. Hamilton's taste.

Which brings us back to the question hinted at, if not asked outright, earlier. Is Mr. Hamilton's taste intact, now that he is an Honorary Member of the Philistines' Dining and Dancing Club? Is his taste as pristine as it was a decade ago when his magazine was launched, or does it take a Fiona Pitt-Kethley or a volume of *London Reviews* to make it seem white by comparison? And, if it is not white but gray, then just how gray is it? On reading the poetry and the prose Mr. Hamilton has chosen for his anthology ("Facing Backwards" by Beryl Bainbridge, "The Beginning of an Idea" by John McGahern, and "Down With Dons," John Carey's thoughts on Maurice Bowra and academic life, come to mind), I must confess that I am amazed at how well Mr. Hamilton has survived as a creative being amid the deafening noise of open-minded twaddle. No intellectual of his caliber would have done half so well in America, where the ruling academic establishment would have aerosolled his taste black by the time he left college. This is in part a tribute to Mr. Hamilton's talent, but also, without doubt, a great symbol of the genuine cultural freedom that still exists in Britain to the detriment of the "open mind."

Andrei Navrozov is the editor of The Yale Literary Magazine *and the poetry editor for* Chronicles.

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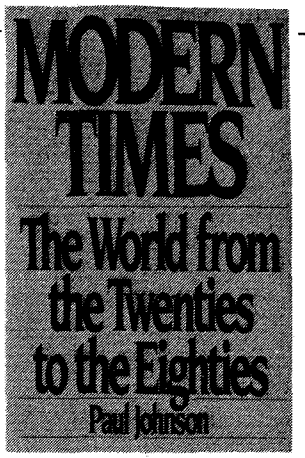

Rarely does a work of history receive from major publications the unbridled enthusiasm that is greeting *Modern Times*. Still less often does such a book by a conservative enjoy this kind of reception.

"A bold and capacious mind is required for what Paul Johnson has undertaken in this book: a history of the world during the last 60 years, taking in all continents and major countries. Fortunately, the author possesses in abundance the qualities necessary to the enterprise....unites historical and critical consciousness.... Johnson is most interested throughout in drawing conclusions, many of them provocative, from his materials. He stands in the train of those historians of the last two centuries for whom historical writing seemed profitless unless it yielded up revelations and judgments pertinent to the world around us....By far the greater part of Mr. Johnson's book is concerned with...the will to power...It is in this light that Mr. Johnson sees the rise, commencing with Lenin, of 'gangster-statesmen.' Among them he includes most prominently Mussolini, Stalin, Hitler and Mao Zedong. In Mr. Johnson's view, Lenin was by far the most influential ...A good deal of Mr. Johnson's book is devoted to tracing the spread of Leninism, and all its ramifications, in the world. Ordinarily we sharply distinguish communism from what became known as fascism. But he sees the distinction as being without much difference. All the founding fathers of totalitarianism, Hitler and Mussolini included, were socialists in principle...There are 20 closely-packed chapters in the book, and I must content myself with a modest selection to convey its riches....we can take a great deal of intellectual pleasure in his book, which is a truly distinguished work of history." — Robert Nisbet, page 1, *NY Times Book Review*

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Fill in the blanks with the people Paul Johnson is referring to:

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"In the atomic field Soviet agents included Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. Morton Sobell, David Greenglass, Harry Gold, _____ (alias Alexander Stevens), to whom Whittaker Chambers acted as courier, and Jacob Golos, as well as Klaus Fuchs, who had been cleared by British security." (Page 458)

"Yet _____ was not a statist. He said he was against any attempt 'to smuggle fascism into America through the back door'. On many issues he was a liberal....He did not make anti-Semitic jokes, like Woodrow Wilson and his wife or Franklin Roosevelt. To a very wide spectrum of educated American opinion, he was the leading American public man..." (Page 243)

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